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CHILDREN'S BOOK
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“BY AND BY;”

OR,

HARRY LEONARD.

BY

MRS. FREDERICK FIELD,

AUTHOR OF “I FORGOT,” “I DIDN’T HEAR,” ETC., ETC.



NEW YORK:
WARD & DRUMMOND,

(SUCCESSORS TO U. D. WARD)

116 NASSAU STREET.

1888.



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By and By

“BY AND BY





BY AND BY.

I.

THE LEONARDS.

THE morning sun shone brightly into the pleasant breakfast-room of the Leonard family, lighting up the tastefully-laid and bountifully-supplied table in the most inviting way. Everything in the room bespoke thrift and comfort, and there was also an unmistakable impress of taste and culture. Mr. and Mrs. Leonard were seated opposite each other at the breakfast-table, and Mrs. Leonard had her pretty little three-years old daughter Rosa in a high chair by her side. The beef-

steak and toast and coffee were all snoking. There was evidently no reason why they should not begin to enjoy them; but still Mr. Leonard did not take up the carver nor Mrs. Leonard the coffee-urn.

The reason was just this—there were four more children to come; and where were they? Harry, the oldest boy, had not yet made his appearance, although two bells had been rung. Alice, Harry's twin sister, a lovely-looking, graceful girl of about fourteen, stood in a bay window with a book in her hand, evidently all absorbed; while two little boys, one eight and the other ten years old, were busy in another part of the room fastening straps on to a pair of skates.

“Come, children!” said Mrs. Leonard.

“In just half a minute, mother,” answered one of the little boys, while Alice did not notice the summons at all.

“Alice! Alice!” called the mother, “don't you see you are keeping father waiting?”

Alice seemed to wake as from a dream, and came quickly to her place.

Mr. Leonard grew impatient. "Boys!" he said rather sharply, "drop your skates there, and come to the table."

When the father spoke in that way they knew no further delay would answer, so they, too, came. The blessing was asked, and the delayed meal began.

When they were nearly half through, Master Harry came leisurely in, and, bidding them good morning, drew his chair to its accustomed place beside his sister Alice.

"How late you are my son!" said the mother, with a reproving glance.

"Yes, mother," he answered frankly, "I was so sleepy, so desperately sleepy, and I kept thinking there was time enough, when behold the second bell rang!" He was a good-looking, carefully-dressed, pleasant-speaking boy, and it really was very hard work to scold him! Besides, he seemed to be mentally clad in metal—everything in the way of reproof glanced off from him so lightly. So his mother shook her head at him. "Ah, my boy, there is never 'time enough' for us to be

lazy in," she said; but as she said it, she smiled, and Harry smiled back again brightly, and the smile ran round the table. Thoroughly good-natured folks were they all. There could be no doubt of that.

And now that we have our family all together at last, perhaps it will be a good time to tell you a little more about them. To begin with the father. He was a tall, thin, active, nervous, middle-aged man, with a very kind, genial smile and manner when he spoke, but with a careworn, absorbed expression on his face most of the time. Indeed, he was a true type of an over-worked American business-man. He owned an extensive flouring-mill, and morning, noon and night was occupied with business cares. His mill was located in the thriving western town of Clear Rapids; and here stood his pleasant home—the home his unceasing labor had bought and furnished, and kept supplied with all the comforts and many of the luxuries of life.

But it was Mrs. Leonard, even more than

himself, who had made that home lovely and attractive, and full of those nameless charms which rendered it to her husband and children, aye, and to herself, too, the dearest spot on earth. Mr. Leonard had brought her to the West, from her New England home, a young and inexperienced girl, and he had little else to bring, except such capital as lies in a clear head, an upright mind and a pair of strong hands. Yet he was rich, indeed! She had proved a helpmeet to him. A good wife, a good mother. "Only a little too indulgent to all of us," said Mr Leonard; "and that is a feeling that leans to virtue's side!" Cares had told upon her somewhat, of course, and there was here and there a line upon her forehead bespeaking thought and anxiety. But her naturally cheerful, equable temper had grown ever sweeter under the discipline of life. When flour "went down," and the commercial skies were dark and lowering, Mr. Leonard always found "an Italy" at home, he said. And when flour "went up," her sensible, little head was not turned by the sudden change.

“Why should I not always be thankful and happy?” she said. “None of the great crushing sorrows of life have ever come to me. My children have all lived and been strong and well, and, what is the rarest thing of all, I am thoroughly healthy myself.”

And the children, whatever faults and failings they might have—however much they might sometimes try and trouble her—yet always had an underlying consciousness, which frequently found vent in expression, that she was the very dearest mother in the world.

And now as to these children. Harry and Alice were twins, as I have said, and the very best of friends. Had they not rocked in one cradle, tumbled about on the same carpet, crept, and “toddled,” and walked, ran and played and studied together all their brief happy lives? As Alice declared, they were “one and inseparable, now and forever;” and Harry averred that he “went in” for Female Suffrage distinctly, and if they didn’t adopt it in their native State, he was going to take Alice where they did, for he and she were

going to the polls together when they were twenty-one, and after that they were going to study law and open a law-office together! Whereat Alice smiled, and as they both had read "Old Curiosity Shop," she reminded him of "Sampson" and "Miss Brass," and they laughed merrily.

It was rather a blue time, financially, when these little twin crafts had sailed into "Baby-come Bay," and it was by no means clear just how they could conveniently be provided for; but they were very warmly welcomed for all that, and, as events had proved, the little, healthy, happy babies had been most lovingly and generously cared for. Indeed, they had "paid their way" right along, both father and mother declared, as babies generally do, I believe.

And now they were fourteen years old. Harry was a merry, careless boy, right-minded on most subjects, quick to learn, but slow to begin; sociable, witty and fun-loving. He was very fond of his friends, and meant to do about the right thing by them generally; yet

was often a source of trial and anxiety to them, because he never seemed to realize anything about the value of minutes ; was so easy and careless and irresponsible. And then, when reproved, he had, as I said before, such a slippery way, or, as Johanna, the Irish girl, who had lived with them for years, said, "such a coaxin' way wid him," that he was never very severely dealt with.

Mrs. Leonard was too wise a mother, and above all, too good a Christian to make an idol of her brave, bright boy ; but there can be no doubt she was, as her husband so often said, a little too indulgent.

But if Harry had rather more petting from his mother than was really best, Alice was in quite as much danger from her father's tender love ; though it was not very easy to "spoil" Alice. She had such a rare, sweet nature ; sensitive, loving, unselfish. It had always been a wonderful rest to the tired, world-weary father to take his little fair-haired girl on his knee for a few moments after almost every meal, and forget crops and markets,

"white wheat" and "Mediterranean," in her lively and entirely uncommercial talk. So father and daughter were very intimate and sympathizing friends.

The little boys were busy fellows, though in quite a different way. Johnny was ten years old; he was "the miller." From the time when, at two years old, he would patiently work at balancing a little stick on one of the rounds of a chair, and then sit by, like a watch-dog, to warn off all passers-by from meddling with his "millchine;" up to the present time, when he never tired of watching the machinery of his father's mill, and understood thoroughly the use of every wheel and band, he had been called "the miller," and he never resented the title. But his head was good for some other things beside machinery. He was a patient, thorough sort of a boy, and almost always made up by diligence what he lacked in speed. His mother depended on him not a little in her daily round of duties.

Then came Will, who was just an intangible,

unreliable, rattle-brained little mortal. Will o'-the-wisp, they called him, for he was for ever flitting about; but when you tried to put your hand on him "he wasn't there!" The most reckless, headlong, unmanageable little colt that ever cantered around in a peaceable, well-ordered domestic inclosure! He drove his mother wild with his antics, and then when she was fain to let him go and visit his father at his office in the mill for a little while, he was sure to upset an ink bottle, or make a kite of a valuable paper, and ask so many questions, that, in the course of an hour, back he was sure to come again, with two cents jingling in his pocket, the price his father had cheerfully paid, in consideration of a promise from Will that he would go straight home and stay there! There was only one thing about Will that was very encouraging, and of which all his friends were entirely sure, and that was that "his heart was in the right place." He was the most generous, self-forgetting little fellow, full of sympathy, and so desperately penitent (for a little while) over his mis-

deeds ! The line of distinction between "mine and thine" was very lightly drawn in his mind ; so he was a great trial to the careful, methodical Johnny, and many and lengthy, alas, were their disagreements ; but it all ended generally by Will's making an unconditional surrender !

As to Rosa—Rosamond was the real name, and it was a name of Alice's choosing—she was to them all "the wee, white rose of all the world."

So, having made you well acquainted with this pleasant household, I hope you will enjoy the story of their home life for a few weeks or months.

They had their faults, you are sorry to see, and the troubles which came from them may be a needed warning ; or if we find that they grew wiser, and got the mastery of some of their weak points, how glad you will be, and perhaps, how encouraged !

And now we will go back to the cheerful breakfast-table.

"I am in a great hurry, my dear," said Mr

Leonard, looking at his wife, and hastily finishing his cup of coffee and rolling up his napkin, and they all followed his example. But there was one thing Mr. Leonard never neglected, no matter how great his haste, and that was family prayer. So they all went now into the parlor, which was the family living room—there were no shut up rooms in Mrs. Leonard's house. The Bibles were brought from their places in the book-case, and they seated themselves in their accustomed way—Harry and Alice looking over together always; the two little boys also together, and little Rosa, “making believe,” read with mamma, and, when her turn came, slowly saying after mamma, at least part of a verse. It was one of the prettiest shams in the world! They were reading the book of Proverbs in course, and this morning they read the eighth chapter. Mr. Leonard simply said as they began the chapter—“This is heavenly wisdom, you know, children, which is here represented as calling to us.” When they came to the seventeenth verse, it was Mrs. Leonard's turn, and

she read it slowly, then paused a moment, and again read in the same sweet, serious, earnest voice, "And those that seek me early shall find me." It needed no explanation or comment. What words of man could add force or attractiveness to the sacred assurance! And each child felt that the promise was a personal one. But only Alice could feel, "I have sought and found." Harry's thought was, "By and by I will seek wisdom—it will still be 'early'!"

Then they always sang a verse or two of some well-known hymn, and it was often Rose's reward for being quiet through the reading, to select the hymn. After a moment's whispered consultation with mamma, this morning, she answered, "I think when I read that sweet story of old." Alice opened the piano, and the sweet young voices mingled with the older ones in the beautiful hymn. Then followed Mr. Leonard's prayer, brief, simple, fervent, and the "sweet hour of prayer" was over; but who can doubt that its blessed influences would last through the day—through life—through eternity?



Mr. Leonard put on his overcoat hurriedly kissed little Rosa, a ceremony never omitted, gave one or two brief directions to Harry, and with a bow and smile to them all, was gone. Mrs. Leonard put on an ample gingham apron, and went into the kitchen, for it was Monday morning, and they kept but one girl—strong, willing, quick-witted, loud-voiced Johanna Carrigan. The little boys finished up the “rigging” of the skates and scampered off. Alice tucked up her sleeves and went into the dining-room, where she knew her part in the daily routine awaited her. This consisted in the washing of the glass and silver used in the daily meals. She did not like to do it one bit, but Mrs. Leonard was systematic and methodical, and it had been “Alice’s work” so long, that she had almost forgotten to say how she hated it. Besides it had never made any difference! Rosa perched herself in her high chair close to Alice, to “help” her, she said; and Harry came running in with cap, comforter and mittens on.

“Now, Alice,” he said, “I’ve taken care of

Prince and Juno," (Prince was the good old horse, and Juno the cow; and Harry had the care of both formally delegated to him when he was twelve years old,) "and now I'm going down to the blacksmith's to get my sled runner fixed, but I'll be back to go to school with you."

"But, Harry," said Alice, "we ought to study every minute this morning. You know Saturday evening you went over to see Ned Wilcox, and I"—blushing a little—"read the 'Lady of the Lake,' and so our Algebra wasn't looked at. It's just quarter of eight," she went on, "and I'll be through with my work here in five minutes, and be all ready to study."

"O, you'll have to go up-stairs and make beds, and then beautify yourself," he answered

"No, Harry," she answered, turning her bright face towards him for inspection. "See my hair, sir, and my pretty collar and bow, sir! Am I not 'beautified' enough? And as to the beds, you know mother only expects me these short mornings to open the windows

and shake up the mattresses. I'll do it in precisely forty-five seconds!"

"Well," he cried gaily, "I'll be back by and by, and we'll reduce those equations to utter ruin!" and away he ran.

"By and by!" echoed Alice, hopelessly. 'He talks as if an hour were an age! That's the last I shall see of him!"

So she hurried about, and at eight o'clock was seated at her solitary task. She was very quick, and it was only a little study that was expected of them, out of school.

The great Union School buildings stood near Mr. Leonard's house, and at twenty minutes before nine, Alice sprang up lightly, and began putting on overshoes, hood and sack. The ever mindful mother had brought all the wrappings, and laid them on the table, and now stood, brush in hand, putting the finishing touches to the little boys' toilets. She had just rung them in from their very safe skating place in the back yard.

"Now, off with you all," she said, kissing the ruddy young cheeks between rapid but-

tonings and tyings, "and be good children." This was one of her "precept upon precept" sayings.

In rushed breathless Harry. "Oh, mother, give me the brush one minute! And, Alice, have you got the books? I didn't get back quite so quick as I meant to," he said, apologetically.

Alice looked at him half-scornfully, held up her paper of "statements;" and away they went pell-mell, throwing back kisses to the mother, who stood watching them from the window, and then threw a little shawl about her and went out after them to shut the gate.





II.

SCHOOL LIFE AND HOME LIFE.

THE school where the Leonard children went daily was a graded one, and the little boys Johnny and Will were in separate rooms in the lower department, while Harry and Alice were in the Grammar department, more particularly under the charge of the principal, Mr. Grover.

Our present story has more especially to deal with Harry, as he was considerably more given to what Alice called "by-and-by-ative-ness," than the others; so no little reader need think that the younger boys are neglected, or their experiences considered of less im-

portance than Harry's. It is only because his history best serves our present purpose.

Mr Grover was an admirable teacher, patient, thorough, kind, but as the boys said "perpendicular." He always dealt most severely with dishonesty and unfairness. Woe to the boy or girl who was discovered with the dates in the History lesson minutely written on his or her thumb-nails! A double woe to any one who was found tyrannizing over younger scholars! As these were no faults of the Leonards, they generally stood high on the roll of honor at school. But Mr. Grover was sufficiently displeased with dilatoriness and carelessness; so Harry sometimes found himself in disgrace.

On this particular Monday morning, Harry realized that an hour lost in the morning one may chase in vain all day. He managed on the way to school to get his Algebra open at the right place, and with Alice's help to make a little headway with the problems, which so far from being "reduced to utter ruin," he now felt might ruin h.m. The morning was

cold, however, and the children ran briskly along, but by keeping his eyes on his book instead of his steps, Harry came to grief, for he brought up most unexpectedly against an inconveniently located hitching-post, with a shock that fairly staggered him, and sent his book flying through the air. This unlucky encounter happened close to the school house, and Harry's sudden discomfiture was greeted with shouts of laughter. Who could help laughing? But it almost upset Harry's equable temper.

"I say, Harry, at about how many pounds would you estimate your momentum?" shouted a fellow-member of the Natural Philosophy class.

"About forty thousand pounds," answered Harry, with a laugh which was slightly forced.

They all hurried in as the bell rang, but went softly up stairs. There was no clamorous shouting and rushing and pushing in that school.

Then came the opening devotional exercise,

in which Mr. Grover very earnestly commended his pupils to the care and guidance of the great Teacher, and the day's work began. For Harry and Alice there was only just time enough in the morning to prepare for each recitation as fast as it came, and the Algebra lesson had to be learned out of school almost entirely. Harry had only had time for a few moments' hurried glancing at the lesson, when the class was called, and, with not a few misgivings, he went with the others into the recitation room and took his place. But he always trusted largely to "good-luck," and truly he had had a great deal of it in his brief career; for good luck usually means some good natural endowment. Shrewdness and quickness it meant with Harry.

As "luck" would have it, however, this morning Mr. Grover called out Harry first, and on a problem at which he had not even glanced. Could it be possible he saw Harry's encounter with the post, and guessed at the condition of things? Mr. Grover was a Yankee!

"Leonard," he said (he always called the boys by their surnames). "Leonard, you may go to the board and take the twenty-third problem."

Harry felt extremely warm and uncomfortable, but went to the black-board. Alice could fairly hear her heart beat! He looked at the question; he looked at the board; he looked at the floor! He tried to think, but there was no time to think—Mr. Grover was so dreadfully prompt always! He looked at the question again—thought he had a glimmering idea about it, and at it he went. There were two unknown quantities, fearfully unknown to poor Harry; and after a few moments of rapid writing and erasing, his x s and y s got as completely entangled as if they were not peaceable neighbors in the same alphabet, and his pluses and minuses were fairly bewildering!

"What is the matter?" said Mr. Grover, kindly. "Have you thought much about this problem?"

Now Harry had done a vast amount of thinking about it in the last few moments but

he was far too honest to take advantage of that fact, so he turned his red face away a little, and told the truth.

"I had not thought about it at all, sir, till I came to the class."

"Have you studied your lesson any?" asked Mr. Grover.

"No, sir."

"Have you any excuse?"

"No, sir."

"You can be excused from the class."

It was a bitter mortification to Harry; and, as he walked quietly out of the room, he glanced at Alice, and saw her loving, blue eyes full of tears. He cared fully as much for her sorrow as he did for his own disgrace, and he said to himself: "I ought to be whipped for making Alice feel so, and I'll 'put into' my Algebra when she wants me to, after this."

"You may bring those problems to me, to-morrow morning, Leonard, carefully written out," said Mr. Grover, as he passed Harry's seat; so the lesson always had to be learned sooner or later, and Harry resolved it should

be *sooner* after this with him. But Harry's memory was often very short! And as they ran home from school together at noon, what did Harry say to Alice, in an apologetic tone, but "I don't see what ailed me this morning, not to do that question right off, for just as soon as I went back to the school-room I saw right into it."

"Oh, Harry," she answered, "it was just what so often ails you, your miserable by-and-by-ativeness!"

But Harry did not quite see it in that light, or, at least, did not feel it.

The nice dinner was all ready, and the children sat down a little more promptly than in the morning, but Mrs. Leonard had to do some more hurrying, as usual; it seemed to be one of the inevitable trials of her daily life—this getting the children to the table. They were hungry enough always, but then they had so much else on their minds! Perhaps Mrs. Leonard bore their dilatoriness with a little too much patience. It was one of her cardinal virtues; but then there is a point

when, as we all know, it ceases to be a virtue.

Mr. Leonard came running in late, as he was very apt to do, he had so many things to delay him. And then it was school-time again; and again the watchful mother stood on guard, with brush in hand, to see that no careless-looking hair, or soiled hands, or untidy finger-nails, or unguarded throats went forth from her domain. Again, too, she said, "Be good children." Could any ever go astray to whom that loving admonition had been so often given?

That afternoon, by dint of extraordinary efforts, Harry succeeded in catching up with his Algebra-class, and handed Mr. Grover a paper as he went out, with all the problems neatly and correctly stated. There really was no trouble with Harry's brains, unless it was in that little department of them where the ability to take a note of time was located. Mr. Grover took the paper, looked it over for a moment, and then said, "All correct, Leonard; but there is a problem which I have tried to solve in vain, and that is *how your fa-*

ther's boy can be so often caught napping by old Father Time!"

The children raced home together, and as they came in glowing and bright and noisy, at four o'clock, their mother and Rosa gave them the most cordial of welcomes.

Alice took off her hood and sack quickly, and hung them up in a little closet, where the children kept their wraps, and where Mrs. Leonard tried very hard to have "a place for everything and everything in its place." She succeeded pretty well with Johnny and Alice, but, alas! for Harry and Will—their caps and mittens were so apt to be thrown down anywhere, to be hung up "by and by."

Alice was not quite fond enough of outdoor life, and was a little too pale and book-loving; but she joined very readily now in a game which Rosa immediately commenced, in which she (Rosa) was a "Mouse in a Mill," nibbling and squeaking among imaginary bags of wheat behind the sofa, and now and then darting across to another corner, while Alice was a dreadfully wary and hungry cat, in the

most eager but strangely unsuccessful pursuit. The boys shouted and laughed, and they all made a tremendous noise. Harry said that when they came home from school and broke into the peaceful parlor, it was like an invasion of the Goths.

After a little while the boys went out for a "big slide" they said. There were no steep hills in this Western town—they could not have such fun as they read and heard of the Yankee boys having; but such little slopes as they had, they made the most of. They played till it grew dark, and then came home to attend to "the chores," and to get the tea they so much appreciated. They found Alice laying the tea-table, and they ought to have run right out and brought in the evening's supply of wood—that was the younger boys' regular work. And Harry ought to have gone directly to the barn, and fed the horse and cow. But what did they all do but pull off caps and tippets, and pile them up indiscriminately on a side table, and then go to racing about in such a way that Johanna de-

clared she should "go crazy intirely." You see they were all going to attend to these duties "by and by," and sure enough, after tea they did go poking around with a lantern in the barn and-wood shed, stumbling and blundering in a way they might have avoided so easily, by taking daylight for their work.

Mr. Leonard had to hurry back to his office after tea—there came no pleasant evenings at home to this poor man. And then Harry and Alice sat down to their Algebra. It was beautiful to see the young brother and sister at work together! If Alice saw quicker, Harry often saw farther, and if Harry had a little the best memory about past principles, which threw light on present questions, Alice was more patient; so they were charmingly matched, and they were as interested and animated over the problems as if they were matters of personal importance to them. Their brows would be as knitted and anxious as those of scheming politicians, and anon Alice would clap her hands and cry, "Eureka!" and then, "Shall I tell you, Harry?"

"No, wait a minute, I want to find it out myself.—Ah, I see, too!"

So the happy hour went by, and the lesson was learned.

Harry got up, took out his handkerchief, and wiped off a vast amount of imaginary perspiration, while Alice waltzed about the room, and executed a surprising pirouette that she certainly had never learned at any dancing school, for she had never been to one!

Then it was nine o'clock, and Mrs. Leonard fairly drove them off to bed—they both declaring, as they kissed her good night, that she was a most relentless tyrant!

The mother was tired enough herself to go directly to bed, still she waited a little, hoping to hear a certain well-known step come briskly up the walk, but was disappointed, and had to make her nightly rounds alone—tucking up the little boys with a loving look on her face—putting Rosa's little restless arm under the crib blanket, kissing the rosy little sleeper softly two or three times, and then kneeling by her own bedside to pray, remembering

there each of her dear happy children, and asking :

‘Send down on their pleasure smiles passing its measure,
God who is over us all.’

It was nearly eleven o'clock when Mr. Leonard came in, and, locking the door, threw off his overcoat, and sat down by the still glowing fire to warm for a few moments. “This is not just the way to live,” he thought, ‘but being in the maelstrom, how can I help myself? How I hope there will come more leisure by and by!’”





III.

COMPOSITIONS.

THERE was nothing particularly noteworthy in the course of the next few days in the experiences of the Leonards. Everything went on much as usual at school and at home. Harry's besetting weakness brought him no very marked trouble until on a certain Friday afternoon they were duly reminded at school that the next day was the proper time for "Room E," to write its compositions. Harry and Alice were integral parts of "Room E."

"You may all write letters, if you please, for your compositions this week," said Mr.

Grover, "and let me see what sort of correspondents you are."

It was not much of a task for either Harry or Alice to write compositions, and they talked it over a little Friday evening.

"I think," said Harry, "it would be a good idea to write letters a little out of the common line—such as don't find their way into Uncle Sam's mail-bags—say from one horse to another, or something like that."

"Splendid!" cried Alice, and she fell to planning hers so busily that she could not get to sleep for an hour or two after she had laid her head on her pillow.

Saturday morning had to be devoted by Alice to helping mother. She went about with the skirt of her dress pinned up, a pair of old gloves on, and an old blue veil tied around her pretty head; and swept and dusted as if she had a profound belief in Queen Mab. Indeed when Harry joked her about her appearance, she quoted to him promptly

"Sweep your house; who doth not so,
Mab w'll pinch her by the toe!"

Directly after dinner all the children went on an expedition to "Aunt Huldah's"—a maiden lady who did tailoring, and was aunt to everybody. She lived a mile away from Mr. Leonard's, and Alice, who always preferred an easy chair and a book to a run in the wintry air, would a good deal rather have stayed at home. But the little boys were to be measured for some new suits, and Mrs. Leonard wanted Alice to go and give some directions. Harry went because Alice was going, and little Rosa because she could have such a grand ride on one of the boys' sleds.

Away they ran, even Alice enjoying it ever so much after she had got fairly started. Once in a while Rosa would roll off, but she could not possibly be hurt on such a joyful occasion. "I'm des a 'ittle dumplin'," she said.

They made a call at the mill, and papa came out to greet the gay little cavalcade, and exchange salutations with Rosa. When he went back into the office, and the children were gone, he felt as if he had been into a new world—

“A sunshiny world full of laughter and leisure,
And fresh hearts unconscious of sorrow and thrall.”

It was almost Spring now, and there was a soft south wind blowing. The undercurrent to Alice's thoughts all day had been about

“—— isles whose summer smiles,
No wintry winds annoy,”

and so she was particularly charmed with the sunshine and the warm wind.

“Oh, Harry,” she said, “how sweet and balmy this wind is! How I would love to live where winter never came!”

“What a girl!” said Harry. “This wind will make you as brown as a squaw. I like cold weather, myself. I guess we'll have our law office in Lapland! Will you go with us Rosa, and have some little reindeer to drive?”

“No,” said Rosa. “Johnny and Will be my reindeers!”

Whereat Johnny and Will jumped and capered, and shook imaginary antlers, greatly to her delight.

Then Alice began to tell Harry a little about her forthcoming letter. "It's going to be from a wild canary bird to my Diamond," she said, "and I've thought of ever so many nice things to write."

"And mine," said Harry, "is going to be from our old Prince to that fancy colt Mr. St. George had here last summer!"

"Capital!" said Alice. "And let's write them as soon as we get back."

"Not I," said Harry. "I'm going to dash mine off this evening."

"I don't like dashed-off things," said Alice.

So that afternoon, Alice sat down in her own pleasant little room, wrote, and re-wrote, and had it all finished just to her mind, when the tea-bell rang.

In the evening, they had visitors, and Harry, who was the most sociable fellow in the world could not tear himself away from their delightful conversation, and go into voluntary exile, with no more enticing employment than composition writing. So the evening passed; and Mrs. Leonard was rigid about the bed-time regulations. Harry could not sit up.

Sunday came and went. Harry was strongly tempted to do something at his neglected writing, but on the whole he had been too correctly trained to get leave from his conscience for any such forbidden proceeding.

But Monday morning, he was actually up early, and made a desperate effort to get ready for school. If there only had been more time! Harry could think fast enough, but he was anxious to make a little selection in his ideas, and he was not a very rapid penman. As to spelling—the dreadful spelling! English Orthography had always been too much for Harry!

“Say, Alice,” he kept calling. “How do you spell” — first one word, and then another. At last, she came and looked over his shoulder. “Oh, Harry! how *have* you spelled stable? Put the *e* after the *l*, for pity’s sake! And scratch out one of those *l*’s in pailful.”

Twenty minutes of nine! They must go, Harry’s composition just about half written! He jumped up, gave it a hasty fold, and con-

siderably, but rather indefinitely, vexed, hurried off with the rest. Mr. Grover always called the roll immediately after the opening of school, and on those mornings when compositions were due, each scholar was expected, directly after his name was called, to go promptly forward and hand to the assistant teacher, either his composition, or a written excuse. Those who were unprepared with either, were also expected to come forward and take a vacant front seat, used as a recitation seat.

There were only two delinquents this morning; our Harry, and a great lazy unpopular drone of a girl, whose name was Samantha Dyer. A suppressed titter ran around the room as Harry took his place beside the sulky-looking Samantha. He tried to look unconscious and indifferent; ran his hand carelessly through his wavy brown hair, and "face'd the music," as he said, but it was very hard work. There he must sit till his letter was finished, and a very unpleasant time he had of it.

Mr. Grover supplied them with writing materials, and Harry plunged into his work. He was always too sensible and well-bred, to be sullen or obstinate; and in the course of an hour he handed the teacher his composition, and was at liberty to take his own seat, while Samantha frowned and pouted, and bit her finger-nails, all the forenoon. Finally, when the danger of losing her dinner became apparent, she suddenly seemed to come to her senses, and penned the following brilliant letter:

“ deer Ant

i rite these few lines to lett you know I am well and hope you are enjoyin the same blesing. pa and ma are well so is John so no more at present from your neece

Samantha.”

Again the lost morning hour was chased vainly by Harry all day, and again he had to take a running fire of fun and ridicule from some of his schoolmates, the effect of which was greatly enhanced by allusions to his com-

passion in trouble. He was really glad to get home and be let alone, for Alice, wisely and kindly, made no reference to the subject.

Wednesday morning the compositions were returned to the young authors to be re-copied, with the teacher's corrections. The teacher also wrote always her criticism on the style, etc., at the end of the composition. She arranged it under three heads:—Treatment of the subject—Spelling and punctuation—and Penmanship. This time, Alice's was returned to her, with the following pencilled criticism :

“Treatment of subject.—Original and good.

“Orthography.—Correct.

“Penmanship.—Excellent.”

Harry's criticism read thus :

“Style.—Original and brilliant.

“Orthography.—Shocking!

“Penmanship.—Very careless.”

He felt rather crest-fallen, but comforted himself with the first line. That was Harry's great mistake; he always tried to shove unpleasant things right out of his mind, and reproof he considered particularly disagreeable.

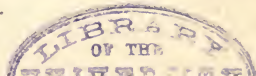
When Friday afternoon came, the "compo's" were read by their authors, before the assembled school, and often before quite a number of visitors. I wish you could have seen our Alice, as she stood on the platform, in her pretty blue merino dress and white apron, with her light brown hair brushed back so smoothly; and such a bright color in her young cheeks! But although you cannot see her, or hear her slightly tremulous, but clear young voice, you may read her letter, and here it is.

"A LETTER FROM THE CANARY ISLES.

"The other morning I went into my room, where the window had been open for a little while, and there, right between the wires of my little Diamond's cage, I found a letter, beautifully addressed to 'Diamond. Favor of the South-wind.' It was written on delicate foreign paper, but had no post-mark. With Diamond's permission, I opened and read it; and then obtained leave to copy it for the benefit of my schoolmates. It was written in

the Birdic language, but as I am very familiar with that tongue, I found no difficulty in translating it. I will only say that it is a very concise language, one of their words being equivalent to about a dozen of ours. This is the letter:

“DARLING COUSIN DIAMOND,—Zephyr brought me your letter duly, and as we very seldom get any letters from our American cousins, I flew about at a great rate, and got together all our friends to hear the good news, for I must say I think it is the best of news to know that our friends who have been carried away and sold as captives, are really so well off. We were afraid that some dreadful fate had befallen them. Every little while, when some ship folds its great white wings here, the sailors come on shore, and manage to catch some of our happy tribe; and then we have to look on helplessly, and see the poor things shut up in little prisons, and, with breaking hearts, carried away. There is a tradition, too, with us that this dreadful trade has been going on for



four hundred years! How delighted we are to know that you and your ancestors have had such gentle captors. Truly it is hard to be kept shut up in such a little place, when you are longing to soar away in the sunshine, and lead a free life in the wild woods; and the stories you tell of the sufferings some of our friends have endured, from the forgetfulness or carelessness of their owners, are truly shocking. As to those horrid animals, the cats, I shudder at the thought of them!

“‘But then, living in such lovely happy homes as most of you do, and which you have the sweet privilege of cheering with your lovely songs, I think must be almost as charming as to be here in our paradise.

“‘I must tell you that we have some troubles too. The sun does not always shine here. We have often long weeks of dismal rainy weather, when it is very hard to keep a dry feather. Dreadful tornadoes often sweep over our island home, uprooting the forests, and carrying our poor little folks away off on the great cold sea. Then there are earth-

quakes, and volcanoes, and other fearful things, such as never visit your peaceful home. Great birds of prey swoop down on us from above, and horrible serpents creep up to us from below. I think I see you shaking your pretty yellow plumes, (ours are all green, the most beautiful olive green,) and thanking your stars that the sailors carried away your ancestors to a better country. So I will just say before you pity us too much, that we think there never was such a lovely Eden as ours, such sunny skies, such delicious fruit, such exquisite flowers. If there are troubles and dangers, we know right well how to avoid them; and the gentle dark-skinned people who live here, are our good friends. The same kind Hand that cares for the sparrows, cares also for us. Let us all be happy where we are.

“ Everything that you wrote was extremely interesting to us, and we shall all be overjoyed to have you write again.

Most lovingly, your cousin,

EMERALD.”

Then Alice went to her seat, and was very glad indeed, to be safely there, with the ordeal over. She never could get quite used to reading in public, and didn't really believe she should ever enjoy the career of a lawyer, which Harry so often assured her was her manifest destiny!

When Harry's turn came, I wish you could have seen him, too. He looked so nicely in his perfect-fitting brown suit; and his face was so brimful of health and animation. Great occasions always developed Harry. You would not dream he could ever be slow or lazy! He looked about a moment, with such a world of fun in his eyes, bowed gracefully, and began:

“A PRINCELY CORRESPONDENCE!

“Last Saturday I was racking my brains with plans for my coming composition, so I went out to the barn to meditate, and give our venerable old horse Prince a pailful of water. I found the old fellow standing at his entire halter's length back from the manger,

and evidently trying to get his aged eyes at just the proper distance, to enable him to decipher a curious-looking document, which he had hung on to a splinter on the front of the stall.

“ ‘Why, hallo, Prince!’ says I, ‘wouldn’t you like to have me read that for you?’

“ ‘Well, yes,’ said he, ‘I don’t care if you do; it’s rather dark here.’ The truth is that old horse is very weak on the subject of age. I’ve often spoken to him about spectacles, and offered to get him any kind he would wear, from leather goggles up to gold rims, but he always takes it as an insult.

“ So I took the paper and said nothing. It proved to be a letter from that fancy young horse, ‘Black Prince,’ that Mr. St. George had up here last summer from Benton. He was out in the same pasture with old Prince a little while, and, it seems, took a liking to him. Now, if any of you want to ask questions as to how Prince and I talk, or how he got the letter, or anything else you can think of, all I have to say that it is a great deal

easier to ask questions than it is to answer them, and I think you may be very thankful to hear the letter!

“MY VENERABLE FRIEND,—How often, as I stand here in my beautiful stable, I think of the pleasant days last August, when you and I were pastured together. I can smell clover every time I think of it! You were very kind to me at first, I remember, because you thought I was a namesake of yours, and so you took a sort of grandfatherly interest in my capers. Do you remember how dreadfully sleepy you used to be those hot days, and how, as you stood snoozing in the sunshine, too far gone to even whisk your tail at the flies, I would come softly up and lay my head over your neck so affectionately, and then give you an awful pinch with my teeth just when you least expected it? I used to be a great trial to you, I know; but don't you think the brisk canters and gallops we took round the pasture together did you a world of good in the way of limbering your joints?

“ ‘ Things go on splendidly with me now— lots of rubbing and fancy feeding, etc. My new harness is silver-mounted, and it is just gorgeous. I tell you, when St. George and I are out with our new trotting-wagon, we make a very stylish turn-out !

“ ‘ I say, old fellow, what’s the use always being so dull and dignified? There’s some fun in you, I know. Do you remember when you showed me how to jump fences that moonlight night, eh? Hoping to hear from you soon. Yours very truly, BLACK PRINCE.’

“ I looked at old Prince to see how he took it, and I never saw a more disgusted face.

“ ‘ Young America !’ said he, ‘ Young America ! He deserves the whipping-post for his impudence. One would suppose I was a hundred years old instead of being just of age ! Will you be good enough, Harry, just to take your pencil and write on the blank side of his sheet a few words of reply ? I’ll send his letter back to him directly. I’ll not keep such a piece of impertinence in the barn !’

“So I took my pencil and wrote as he told me :

“‘DEAR SIR,—I have to say in reply to your favor, that I do remember your tricks, and your manners; and I consider your letter very much like yourself. I am not your grandfather, sir, and I never took any grandfatherly interest in you. I wish you to understand that I never went to sleep standing up out in the pasture—*never*, sir. I merely closed my eyes for a few moments’ reflection. I take no interest in your harness, sir; and I consider it much more respectable to take a worthy family out to ride in a carry-all than a fast young man in a trotting-wagon, whatever that may be. Your ob’t serv’t, PRINCE.’

“‘But, Prince,’ said I, ‘you make no answer to what he says about your teaching him to jump fences;’ and I looked at him severely.

“The old fellow tried to look dignified and unconscious, but it was no use; he just showed all his teeth in a broad grin, and actually winked at me.

“‘A-hem,’ said he, ‘a-hem! Why should I reply to all his nonsense? Run along with you, and put that letter into the head-stall of the first horse you see going to Benton!’ ”

Harry bowed, and “retired amid storms of applause.”





IV.

BROKEN PROMISES.

THE Leonards were very truthful children, in the common sense of the term. Their father's "word was as good as his bond," and their mother never said to a lady friend, "How nicely your little daughter's dress fits!" or "How charmingly your children behave!" and then, when she was gone, pronounce a very different verdict. She never even said, "I am delighted to see you!" when she was not delighted at all. And I have noticed that, when people tell the truth always themselves, their children are very apt to follow their example. Deceit and falsehood are very unpopular in such households.

So when Harry was asked about anything

that had happened, he told the truth, and generally the whole truth, even when the consequences were going to be rather unpleasant to himself. But when future events were in question, never was there a more unreliable boy. He was always "just going" to do all sorts of things, and was as ready with his promises as if there was nothing beyond his abilities.

"Now, Harry," Johnny said, laying hold of him early one morning in April, you know you promised to make me a kite."

"Oh, yes, Johnny, of course I will, but I want to run down town now ; you just wait a while."

So patient Johnny waited and waited. It was Saturday, and that was the only day the little Leonards had for any such great undertakings as kite-making. There was no kite made. The next Saturday he began again :

"Come, Harry, now is the time to make that kite ; see how the wind blows."

"Yes. I'll attend to it by and by."

Johnny got out his twine and paper and

paste, but Harry had sauntered off, and could not be found.

"His everlasting 'by and by,'" said Johnny, 'just means *never*.' So he tinkered and worked away alone, but somehow he couldn't quite make it rise. Finally he took it over to Ned Wilcox, who "did things *now*," as Johnny afterwards explained to Harry, and before noon the kite was sailing away up in the breezy blue sky, to Johnny's intense delight. Kite-flying was as well adapted to Johnny's temperament as if he'd been a little John Chinaman, instead of Johnny Leonard.

"Harry," said Alice, "when will you fix this hinge on my work-box?"

"Oh, pretty soon." But Alice's work-box cover swung on one hinge till she fixed it herself.

"Now, Master Harry," Johanna would begin in her most coaxing manner, "you know that board in the wood-house that's always a springin' up like, an' me breakin' my neck there every day all winter. When will you be after fixin' it."

“Well, Johanna, it ought to be planed off and nailed down, that’s so. I’ll do it some time.” And he put his hands in his pockets and went whistling off.

The result of it all was that Johanna, after a few more “broken necks,” rose up in her wrath, and pitched the offending board far out into the yard, where it was duly found by Will, and sawed up directly for a box-trap. Finally Mr. Leonard sent a carpenter in to repair the floor, at an expense of a dollar and a-half!

“My son,” said Mrs. Leonard, one day, “the sewing circle meets here this afternoon; and, now, can I depend on you to look after the fires all around the house? You know, in this mild weather, we just want a little fire all the time, and not a great winter fire. You will have to be very careful and attend to all the stoves often.”

“Yes, mother, I understand.”

But, O, what a broken reed he proved to be depended on! In the first place he put off filling the wood-boxes till the ladies began to

come, and then had to go rattling around making dust and confusion, greatly to Mrs. Leonard's discomfort. Then for two or three hours they were alternately roasted and frozen, till at last Alice took the matter in charge, and kept the temperature just right without once letting a fire go out. But she was dressed in a pretty silk, and had on the daintiest of white muslin aprons, so that attending to fires did not seem exactly convenient; besides she was at work on some delicate white fabric, and had to run upstairs and wash after each handling of the wood. Do you wonder that she said to Harry, with a strong tinge of irony in her voice, "You're a very useful young man—very. I hope when we go into that law partnership you'll keep an office boy!"

"Half a minute" was a very favorite length of time in Harry's dialect, but if all half minutes were as long as his, it would not take a great many of them to make a very respectable life-time! He changed this expression, however, after a certain occasion. Alice

was sitting in the parlor and he out in the dining-room, and there was an outside door opening into the dining-room, which was wide open.

"Harry," called out Alice, "please shut that door—its freezing us in here."

"In just half a minute," he answered.

In about five minutes she came out and shut it herself, and she shut it rather forcibly!

"Whew!" said Harry.

"O, you may 'whew' away," said she, "but if I should promise to do a thing in half a minute, and then not do it in five or ten, or not at all, I should feel precisely as if I had told a falsehood."

Harry dropped his knife and stick—he was whittling—sat back in his chair, and put on an air of conviction.

"That's so!" said he; "I declare I never saw it in that light before. I'm going to say 'in half a jiffey,' after this!" And so he did.

What a fellow he was to make appointments too!

"Now, Ned, I'll be over at your house to-

morrow morning at seven o'clock, sharp"—accent on the sharp—"and we'll go down to the station and meet your cousin Robert;" so he said to his friend Ned Wilcox one day, and Ned said, "Yes, do, but if you don't come I can't wait for you,"—you see he was well acquainted with Harry. Of course he went to the station next morning alone, and Harry heard the train whistle when he was dressing, and just thought, "Why how early that train is!"—instead of, "How lazy and late I am!"

Many and many a time, however, he made appointments with boys who did not know him so well as Ned did, and so disappointed and inconvenienced them exceedingly.

One little fellow, who was sent by his mother up to "Aunt Huldah's" to carry her certain twist and buttons that she needed, made an arrangement with Harry, who was as obliging as he was dilatory, that he should go with him, and keep him company on the solitary road. Harry was to meet him at a certain corner at eight o'clock on Saturday morning—they fixed upon the hour at school,



Friday afternoon; and promptly at the appointed hour little Dick stood at the fence corner, but there was no Harry visible. Dick perched himself on the rail fence and decided to wait, although he knew that his mother's parting injunction had been to hurry right along. Half an hour went by, spent by Dick in watching the proceedings of a colony of ants, who had founded a city in a half-decayed rail; another half hour, in which Dick built a sand fortification across the road; another half hour, in which Dick lay on the grass watching a pair of robins who were building their lovely little rustic villa; and still half a hour later Dick was startled out of a sound sleep by Harry's cheery voice.

"Why, halloo, Dick, got sleepy did you? Have you been waiting long?"

"Well, yes," said Dick, "quite a while, and I expect I oughtn't to have waited at all. Mother said Aunt Huldah wanted the things early. Let's hurry right along now."

"I guess it isn't much matter," said Harry, consolingly, as they walked on; "Aunt Hul-

dah's time isn't of much account. She looks as if she'd had too much of it!" And they both laughed, but Dick felt a little uncomfortable.

"What hindered you so?" he asked Harry.

"O, my 'Young Folks' came last night, and I got to puzzling over the rebuses this morning, and the first thing I knew it was ten o'clock, and I started right off," he added, with a virtuous air, as if he really deserved great credit for such a prompt proceeding! Then they talked of various other matters, and in a little while were at the door of Aunt Huldah's little snug brown house. But ere they had time to rap, the door sprung open with a jerk, and there stood Aunt Huldah, tall, angular, sharp-featured—these she always was—but this was the first time the boys had either of them ever seen her irate, and fairly bristling with something besides the customary pins and needles! It was a spectacle to be remembered, and her wrathful words, how like one of her native mountain torrents they poured forth!

"Massy to us! Ye hain't really come, have

ye? What on airth made you come at all? My time's no account, nor your cloes, nor nothin' else, but jist your nonsense! Been fishin', or chasin' squirrels, *which* now? Dew tell me which! They're both such interestin' sports, 'specially when boys are sent on errands! Have you got any buttons or twist or anything of that sort left, or did you lose 'em on the road? Mebbe you found the twist nice for fish-lines, eh? And the buttons, mebbe you could make them do at a pinch for marbles? Come, now, turn your dirty pockets inside out, and let's see what you've got left!"

Dick was fairly terrified, as the utterly groundless accusations were hurled at them, but Harry, whose sense of fun was uncontrollable, vainly tried to keep his face straight, and added insult to injury by sitting down on the door-step in a perfect convulsion of laughter. Dick took advantage of the momentary lull to thrust at Aunt Huldah the little brown paper parcel containing the buttons and twist, and would have made an immediate and silent

retreat ; but Harry had sufficiently recovered himself to speak, and, being thoroughly aware that the fault was his, with his usual honesty began to explain.

“ It wasn’t Dick’s fault, Aunt Huldah ; it was I kept him waiting—you see—”

“ I hain’t got no time to ‘ see ’ nor to hear any of your good for nothin’ excuses. Come right into the house both of you. Here, you Dick, put yourself into that jacket about the quickest ! ”

Dick meekly obeyed, and then the way Aunt Huldah twisted and jerked and pinched and turned that hapless offender, before she succeeded in getting his coat fitted, was sufficient to serve as a warning against loitering for all the rest of his life ! Meanwhile she lectured Harry.

“ You’re a nice young man according to your own account ! Hinderin’ a little boy all the forenoon, from doin’ his ma’s errands ! Keepin’ me on tenter-hooks all the mornin’, and me so drove as I always am Saturdays ! Put my eyes out ’most, watchin’ out o’ the

window to see if Dick wa'n't comin'. Burnt out a cord o' wood, too, keepin' my goose hot! Hand me that press-board, now, will ye? And what do you look so smilin' and sassy for? I wonder if you be John Leonard's boy, and old David Leonard's grandson? You don't seem the least in the world like the old stock! I used to know your father well in New Hampshire—we used to go to school together, and there wa'n't a smarter boy in the hull country. And your grandfather's folks, all on 'em—they were likely, drivin' folks, if they was poor. Pity you aint like 'em! Wish your good old grandfather had your bringin' up—he'd show you how to dawdle round in this fashion!"

Harry was considerably sobered by this time, and Aunt Huldah, having had her say out, felt a good deal appeased, and suffered the boys to depart without further remark, except to bid Dick tell his mother that on account of his laziness she shouldn't be able to get his new suit done that day, and so he would have to stay at home from church again.

They did not speak till they got fairly on the road, when Dick remarked in a low voice, "Ain't she a regular stunner, though?"—to which Harry heartily assented.

Poor Dick's troubles were not ended, however. He had to face a pretty severe attack from his mother, when he delivered Aunt Huldah's message, which he did with some reservations. His mother readily guessed the true cause of Aunt Huldah's failure, and sentenced the unhappy little Dick to close confinement for the whole of that most delightful Saturday afternoon—a fact which he afterwards communicated to Harry, who immediately presented him with a jack-knife almost as good as new!

But time would utterly fail me to tell of the hundredth part of the trouble which Harry brought upon himself and those who placed confidence in him, by this terrible fault of his. If he had had a fortune of half-a-million, and all his promises had been guaranteed by promissory notes of one dollar each, to be paid in case the promise was not kept, he would have

been beggared—yes absolutely bankrupt and beggared—long ago!

As my readers may well suppose, his weakness was well known. His friends generally took his fair speeches for about what they were worth. Even when little Rosa asked him to put a rocker on her dolly's cradle, and he answered kindly, "Yes, sweetheart, I will by and by;" instead of thanking him, and looking delighted, she would toss her pretty head scornfully, and answer,

"When is by and by?"

His mother did not dare to rely upon him in any important matter that must be attended to at any definite time, and his father often said, "Come, Johnny, I want you to do this errand for me, for Harry will never get started."

It was really melancholy to see what a character he was forming, and what a reputation he was acquiring, and yet what capabilities he had for better things.



V.

THINGS THAT DID NOT WAIT.

SOME of Harry's friends were quite in the habit of waiting for him. He was so amiable and cheerful, so witty and companionable, that he was a great favorite at home and at school. An evening at home was very dull without him; and among his young friends, no party or merry-making was complete if Harry could not be there. So though it was ever so tiresome to have him always behindhand, yet he was sure of an invitation to all the "good times;" and whether it was a game of ball or a picnic, a nutting-party or a sleigh-ride, the boys would wait for Harry at the appointed place of rendezvous, and often, in the end,

send a special messenger after him. Many were the "blowings up" they planned to give him, but somehow when he came sauntering along, so full of good humor, so polite and obliging, scolding was out of the question.

How Alice used to wait for him! Sometimes in winter they would be going out together, and she would get all ready—hooded and cloaked and gloved—and have to wait in the warm parlor till she was so heated that she was obliged to take off her wrappings, or go out in the air. And often in summer she stood out on the piazza, or at the gate, with the last button fastened, and her parasol raised, waiting for this considerate young man, till she felt as if she were a laughing-stock for the neighbors and passers-by.

Often, too, even his mother and father waited for him quite a while, hurrying him meantime with an impatient, "Come, Harry," or "What *are* you doing, Harry?" or, "Don't be so slow, Harry!"

How many times, too, either Alice or his mother had helped him along with one of his



always-careful toilets! No matter who or what was waiting, those boots must be brushed, that neck-tie arranged, just so elaborately! So Alice would come to the rescue, and button his wristbands, brush his clothes, or hunt up the one single neck-tie—blue, or black, or brown, or green—which, of all others was the only possible one for him to wear! Indeed, as is evident to all, they had waited upon him and waited for him altogether too much.

But there were some things, I am happy to say, that never waited for our hero.

There was the sun, for instance. It had the most persistent and disagreeable way of getting right up in the morning, and shining into Master Harry's eyes, without any consideration as to whether he was ready for it or not! And then the way it used to go down at night was quite as aggravating. Just as Harry waked up to a sense of the fact that if he really did do a full day's work, he surely must begin pretty soon, down would go the orb of day, and night would come on just as if Harry had--

“Something accomplished, something done,
That earned the night’s repose.”

The good old clock, too, that stood on the mantel in the dining-room was entirely regardless of Harry’s wishes or habits. It used to simply measure off to him “all the time there was,” and not a single second more. Its seconds and minutes and hours were determined by astronomical principles, and had no reference whatever to Harry’s fanciful periods. It ignored entirely those vague expressions, *æons* and *cycles*, the only measurements of time which, for length, at all corresponded to Harry’s ideas, and confined its attention strictly to its regular twelve-hour round. As to “jiffies” and “trices,” it held up its two hands in earnest protest against such irregular and unsanctioned expressions! It used to seem sometimes to Harry as if the clock ticked with more force, and energy, and precision than usual, just at those times when he was most anxious to have it act like the rest of his friends, and be a little lenient toward his belated condition! Yes, a very faithful, severe

and incorruptible mentor was that good old clock.

So, inasmuch as the sun did not wait for Harry, neither did the regular procession of the seasons fail to go on. Autumn frosts came right along when they were due, without pausing to inquire if Harry's pop-corn was gathered in; and wintery snows descended relentlessly and covered up the beech-nuts and wall nuts he was always "just going" to pick up. If he only could have learned wisdom from those active, thrifty little squirrels that he loved so well to watch, as he lay on the sweet-smelling piles of fallen leaves, out under the great oak-trees, in the warm, smoky Autumn weather!

Then the Spring would come hurrying along, and it would be the very time of times for making gardens. Alice loved flowers; so and Harry. He liked to see them lighting up with their beauty the edges of the garden-walks. He loved to see brilliant beds of portulacca, or verbenas; and pansies—Alice's favorites—he would have liked to see them in

her hair from April to November. He liked extremely well to give a beautiful rose to his mother, or to almost any lady; nobody could do so with a more graceful bow and smile than he; and he liked just as well to wear a pretty bunch of fragrant pinks in his button hole. He liked all these things, I say; and would have always had them to enjoy if only they would have just taken care of themselves! But, as we all know, the lilies "toil not;" like a great many other delicate beauties, they must be toiled for.

"Dear Harry," said Alice, one Spring morning, "this is the very day to work in the garden. Just see the way everything is starting to grow. Here are my darling little 'daffy-down-dillies' all in bud, and there is n't one bit of frost left in the ground! I'm going to work with my trowel right around these roots, and do you take the spade and come and help me."

"Now, Alice, I never did see such an eager little woman. You know I'm going fishing to-day, and it isn't time to make flower-beds for a month, at least."

“Yes, Harry; but there is ever so much to be done, and we have so little time for gardening, and next Saturday it may rain.”

“What a girl to be looking out for rainy days! You’re equal to the quails, with their ‘More wet! More wet!’ I would n’t be such a croaker. I believe in sunshine myself!” And away he sauntered, whistling, “I love the merry, merry sunshine.”

This is just a specimen of Harry’s regular “Spring style.” The end of it all had been for Alice to sprain her wrists and lame her back, and tire herself generally, doing the work her stronger brother might have done so easily.

But the Spring when they were thirteen years old, Harry was formally set to gardening, and then he and Nature had a regular combat. He discovered then, to his complete disgust, that this venerable dame never waited for him, but that the seeds of weeds were sown, and pushed forward by every possible means, just the same when he was idle as when he was at work. All that rain and sunshine could do

for dock and dandelion, for plantain and purslane, was done, it seemed to Harry, with special zeal, when he wanted to "take it easy for a few days."

I think his father would hardly have given him the care of the vegetable beds, if it had not been for a certain application of Alice's.

"Father," she said to him, one sunny May morning, "can the man who is making the kitchen garden, help me some about my flower-beds?"

"Why, my dear, the man is one of the mill-hands, and I can hardly spare him for this necessary work, and you know there isn't a day laborer to be found. Can't you get some help out of this great broad-shouldered brother of yours?" looking half-reproachfully at Harry, who was enjoying his breakfast hugely, and really looked very well able to handle either a spade or hoe.

"If I could only get him *started*, father," she answered, laughing, but looking troubled. "He is capital help, but O! father, you really have no idea what a piece of work it is

to get him actually *started*! I'd rather launch a ship!" Harry blushed, but it was no use to attempt a word of defence. His weakness had become a by-word as well as a reproach. He could only say,

"I'll help you, Alice."

"Will you help me *to-day*, Harry Leonard—this very identical morning, and not 'by and by'?"

Harry hesitated an instant, and Mr. Leonard came to the rescue.

"Yes, Alice, he will help you *to-day*, and *this morning*, precisely. And now, that I think of it, my son, when I was at your age, I had nearly a man's work to do, both in garden and field. I think it will do you good to have some care in the garden. You may have the entire care of the beds. You must keep them all in perfect order, and then," he added,—he was so apt when he saw one of his children look slightly aggrieved under wholesome discipline, to relent a little and sugar-coat his pill—"I will buy one half the vegetables of you."

“All right, father,” Harry answered promptly, and he and Alice really had a charming morning together. Alice had on a wide brimmed hat, and was equipped with stout shoes and gloves, and Harry took off his coat, and tucked his pantaloons into his boots! How they did plan and work! They had but little room, and must make so much of it. On one side of the house it was all smooth green grass, which was devoted to croquet-playing, but on the “sunny side” was a narrow strip, unshaded by trees, which Alice and her mother had devoted to flowers. Mrs. Leonard came out on this pleasant morning, and joined the councils; and seeds were sorted over, beds arranged, and some changes made in last year’s arrangements. All through the day Harry worked and whistled; and Alice poured out her thanks to him at night, as she sat down to rest her weary little feet, and thoroughly tired hands.

“You’re just splendid, Harry,” she said.
“Only think how much nicer time I’ve had

than if I had been all day trying to get help out of a stupid, clumsy Dutchman!"

"Very happy to have served you, ma'am!" answered Harry, lifting his cap, as he went around the house with hoe and rake over his shoulder.

And now began the war with the weeds. They evidently hadn't the faintest intention of waiting for Harry. When the sun shone warmly, and our hero went thoughtlessly off, on pleasure bent, unmindful of the fact that weeds can be killed twice as easily with a hot sun to help wilt and destroy them, then how they grew and flourished! How they sent great roots downward, and green shoots upward! And then, when Harry had really made up his mind to go at them, what a gentle shower would begin, deepening and strengthening the work of the sun, till Harry made up his mind that the elements were against him. Sluggards always do make the most bitter complaints of the weather, don't they?

Well, when it cleared away, and Harry sal-

ned forth, what times he had! He actually used to have to get the crow-bar to help him uproot the docks and dandelions, and even then there was sure to be some crafty fibre that would elude his search, and in a day or two send up a vigorous new shoot. All day long the poor boy would tug and toil to do what a single hour might have accomplished if it only had been done a week sooner. It was a precisely similar case to that of the poor woman who could not understand "how folks lived who combed their hair every day for her part, she only combed hers once a week, and then it almost killed her."

Harry's labors pretty nearly "killed" him, he thought; to say nothing of the hapless vegetables. Still his father held him to the arrangement, and the soil being a rich soft mold, when they closed the account in the fall, they found that there was a snug little balance in Harry's favor. But if there was any one subject upon which his mind was thoroughly made up, it was that farming, and particularly gardening, was not the way in which he should choose to earn his living.

I have told you that, when Harry's friends were going to ride, they frequently waited for him, and many a good horse stood, and patiently whisked off the flies in summer, or stamped and shivered in winter, while Master Harry was slowly getting ready, or doing things which ought to have been done long before; but there was one horse that went by his own time-table, and not Harry's. This was the great iron horse, known as the LOCOMOTIVE. Now, if there is one sight in the world that is most truly comical, as well as pitiable, it is the spectacle of one of these slow and easy people rushing breathlessly into a railway station just after the train has left. Nobody knows how many times this melancholy fate befel our friend Harry. He seemed to labor under the strange delusion, that railway trains must certainly be just as obliging to him as he had hitherto found the rest of the world, and he never failed to be greatly surprised when all that he succeeded in seeing of a train was just the rear end of the back car rapidly receding in the distance.

Mr. Leonard did a good deal of business in a neighboring city, both with produce dealers, and at the banks, and as it could frequently be done just as well by a messenger as by himself, he often let Harry go in his place. A very active, capable, careful little business man he was, too; cautious about getting off and on the train, which furnished the speedy and pleasant manner of going; careful to follow his father's instructions precisely, in all things, and yet very sagacious when left to his own judgment. No wonder Mr. Leonard liked to introduce him to his business acquaintances, and really placed a great deal of confidence in his unusually bright and mature boy. Nor was Harry any less pleased with these commissions. He loved his father dearly, and was very happy to be of real service to him, and he had a keen appreciation of the manly position in which these quite frequent excursions placed him. It was very delightful too, to go to the larger town, and taste a little of the whirl and bustle of the great world. So if ever he tried to be prompt, it

was on these occasions ; yet, strange as it may seem, so inveterate was his habit of delaying and thinking there was plenty of time, and so accustomed was he to keep people waiting, and so used to having them wait, that the very prompt ways of the Locomotive were apparently quite incomprehensible to him. Several times during the long summer vacation, when he was thirteen years old, he made these trips entirely to his father's and his own satisfaction, and after that it grew to be a very common thing for Mr. Leonard to say to Harry, Saturday morning : " I shall want you to go to Benton this afternoon, my son." And Harry was always more than ready to go, that is, ready to say, " Yes, father, I'd like to, ever so much."

But when the time to go actually came, and the train, ever punctual, rolled majestically into the village, and after a moment's stop, just as grandly rolled away towards Benton, how often, alas ! was our Harry " just half a minute" too late. With what a rueful air did he then listen to the rapidly receding train !

With what an expression of hopeless resignation did he gaze down the long straight track! Then the next thing was to go directly and confess his failure to his father, who not unfrequently was very seriously disappointed.

"This will never, never do, Harry," he said earnestly, one day, when he had been tried in this way, and Harry had no excuse whatever to offer for his failure. "You will never be of the least help to me, if I can't depend upon your being more prompt and punctual, and, what is far worse, you will be unfitted for usefulness in every direction. Something must be done about it. I shall hold you to your engagements after this, Harry."

When Mr. Leonard was fully decided about anything, he was a very decided man, and no one knew this better than Harry. He resolved he would never let that engine get the start of him again. And he set his white teeth together very firmly as he thought about it, and was as earnest as he ever was in his life about anything. Now was seen the good effect of his father's decision, and also the

wholesome moral power of a punctually managed railroad. I have always felt that the opening of a railroad through a town was a positive benefit to the people in one way, at least ; it fairly compels punctuality ; and what a good thing it is for lazy, dilatory folks, to listen to the precepts it daily thunders in their ears !

So Harry, finding that the train never waited for him, grew positively punctual in regard to it, but such deeply rooted faults as his are not easily laid aside, and there came a day again when he was too late for the train. It was a Saturday morning, as usual, and his father had wished him to go down to Benton on an early morning train, and back on the next, so that he would have been at home before noon. He had arranged it all with his father the evening before, and had been as sure as possible that there would be no failure on his part. Johanna was to call him early, and have his breakfast ready before the rest of the family, and she did not fail to do so. But it had chanced when Harry went on this same early

train once before, that Johanna had been so much beforehand with her arrangements, Harry had actually had to wait at the station ten or fifteen minutes before the train came. So now he thought he would not have his patience taxed in this unprecedented way, and when Johanna called him, like a certain well-known person, he said, "A little more sleep, a little more slumber." Then, when his breakfast was ready, he was not ready for it, and in spite of a frantic race to the depot, he was just in time to see the train roll away!

"Now what will father do?" he thought. "Charge me with the expense of sending another messenger, I guess; and if that is all I can stand it." So he hurried home in the clear, beautiful, early morning. His father took his re-appearance very quietly, but Harry knew that there would certainly be a forthcoming sentence, and so was not in the least surprised when, after prayers, Mr. Leonard said, "Now, Harry, you may harness old Prince and drive to Benton!"

Benton was only twelve miles from Clear

Rapids, but the road was muddy from the Spring rains, and old Prince had seen his best days. If there was one particular thing Harry dreaded and disliked, it was to go on a long ride with this venerable steed. In the first place, it wearied him not a little to keep urging the old fellow along, and in the second place, his quiet jog trot, and old-fashioned air of steady respectability, so much prized by Mrs. Leonard in all her little drives about town, were rather trying to Harry's pride. He had frequently urged upon his father the necessity of their having a more spirited and showy horse, but Mr. Leonard drove very little himself, and was entirely willing that Mrs. Leonard should enjoy the safety in riding which she always felt when old Prince was intrusted with the family carriage and its precious freight.

To think of driving that slow old beast to Benton! Harry was about as disgusted and chagrined as he could be, but there was no reprieve. He went slowly towards the barn, and I fear bestowed some very unflattering epithets on the old horse as he put him between

the thills. Then he came in for his overcoat, and found that Alice and Johnny and Will, had all been asking leave to go with him, but had been told by their father that he preferred Harry should go alone. "It will do him good to think instead of talk," said Mr. Leonard, gravely.

Surely he did have ample opportunity for meditation during that long, cold, disagreeable, solitary drive. Old Prince was particularly slow and impervious to either scolding, coaxing, or whipping, and when after all this exasperating experience, Harry enjoyed just as he drove into Benton the spectacle of the railway train on which he might have been, starting for Clear Rapids, he felt remarkably out of sorts.

It did seem, too, as if Prince put his very worst foot forward instead of his best, as they drove through the streets of Benton. He became suddenly lame—he held his neck out like a venerable ewe, and gazed vacantly at everything like a genuine countryman; finally he came to a dead halt in the middle of the

street, and seem fairly palsied! Some impudent boys hooted, and Harry gave the old fellow a cut with the whip that quite rejuvenated him. He bounded forward, and started on at a decidedly brisk pace, whereupon, of course, the boys hallooed "Whoa!" in the most excited manner! It was really very trying.

But finally the errands were all done, and Harry was again on the homeward way. The wind was cold, the mud heavy, the road long. Harry's spirits were below zero, but the Valley of Humiliation "is of itself as fruitful a place as any the crow flies over," said good Mr Great-Heart to Christiana, in the Pilgrim's Progress. It proved full of good fruits to our friend Harry. He made some excellent resolutions in regard to this trusting good luck about catching the train. He scolded himself roundly for his folly in this respect, and for all the trouble he had given his father. He was as penitent and humble as many another pilgrim has been while breathing the wholesome air of this valley, and when he reached home at tea-time, and put the tired old

horse in the stable, he gave him a sympathizing pat and an extra "feed." Then he went in to join the family circle as smilingly as if nothing had happened, and when his father came in, they met in the usual cheery way.

"Everything is all straight, father," Harry said, "and I've had the dolefullest time you ever heard of. I'll go to Benton by railroad after this, when I have the chance!" And he always has. At the time of this writing, Harry has not once failed to remember that **the train** does not wait for him.





VI.

AIR-CASTLES.

A LICE was not nearly so apt to defer immediate duties as Harry was, but she could easily distance him when she gave herself up to the business of day-dreaming. It was as captivating to her as to him to sit down on the hearth-rug on a winter evening, and out of the glowing embers construct "villas in Spain." Or in the leafy June to sit on the grass, out under the great oak trees, and watch

"The white clouds go sailing by
Like ships upon the sea,"

while her own thoughts drifted away on the

lovely summer seas of her fancy. On rainy days, too, when she and Harry were both kept indoors by the storm, and the parlor seemed so cozy and bright, how apt she was to let her work drop into her lap, while she helped Harry build the most wonderful castles in the air! Such delightful things were going to happen to them—such fortunes to be inherited—such journeys taken—such palaces reared, in this vague imaginary future—this dear delusive by and by!

It was all very pleasant and very harmless, too, to a certain extent. Perhaps not the best possible way of spending time, but vastly entertaining, and we must all be entertained sometimes, or have the blues! It is only when it makes present, everyday life seem tame and insipid, and present duties distasteful, that I would find fault with these fanciful young architects. If we could only keep the “golden mean” in our castle-building! Alas, it is quite as hard to do it in this as in anything else! Harry and Alice went most extravagantly astray in this direction very often.

Would you like to hear one of their rainy day talks? Well, I will take the usual story-writer's privilege, and do a little "eaves-dropping" for your benefit. The eaves are dropping in a very literal sense of the term, for the March equinoctial storm is having its own way out of doors. The Leonards are a busy, happy set, who can put rainy weather quite at defiance. Mrs. Leonard has taken the day for ripping, pressing, turning, and generally remodelling, an old dress that was to look when finished

" Amaist as weel as new,"

and she has full possession of the long extension table in the dining-room. The little boys are hammering and sawing and whittling in the wood-house, getting bird-houses ready for the birds who will come so soon. Harry and Alice are in the parlor. Alice with a great pile of towels, and "no end" of ruffling, all of which she is to get ready for the machine as fast as she can; while Harry is going to read the next week's History lessons aloud for their





mutual benefit. Little Rosa flits in and out—welcome everywhere, even in the kitchen, where Johanna is doing some most savory Saturday baking. Happy little one! How can she help being a sunbeam, when wherever she shows her rosy face and scarlet frock, she gets such loving salutations! She puts her head out of the partly open door between the dining-room and kitchen, to take an observation in Johanna's domain, and is greeted with, "Come in, you jewel! An' its a ruby you are, sure, to-day. Or is it the red coral you'd rather be? I'd like to wear you on my neck now!"

Then she peeps out into the wood-house, and the boys run to her for a kiss, and call her "Robin red-breast, and "Fire bird," and "Oriola," and invite her to come and live in a bird-house—a proposition she would have immediately accepted if mamma had not called her birdling back into the warm room, with warning talk of colds and croup. So she trots into the parlor to see what Harry and Alice are doing.

"Ah, here comes Rose-bud!" cries Alice.

"Bring your dollies and come and stay here with us, sweetheart."

So Rosa moves in her numerous family, and is so busy with their imaginary proceedings, that Harry went on with his reading uninterruptedly. They are studying a history of England, and have just come to the execution of Charles I. Alice shuddered, and exclaimed earnestly—"Oh, why must they always be killing each other in history! It is just intrigue, and rebellion, and murder, and war, from beginning to end. It makes one weary of the world to read such fearful stories! I wish I didn't have to believe them!"

"Well," said Harry, drily, "since it's the world we live in, and the people are our fellow creatures, I suppose it's best for us to know exactly what sort of a world it is. Probably you would enjoy better a history of Utopia!"

"Of course, I would, Harry," she answered, frankly, and, with that, down went the work, and she leaned forward in an attitude of rev-

ery, with her cheek resting on her hand. "How charming it would be to read about people who were innocent and good, who never got up rebellions or wars, and who were satisfied to be happy themselves, and let other people be so, and who lived in some lovely country, and"——

"In short," interrupted Harry, "who lived in Utopia or some other imaginary realm! But don't you remember what Mr. Grover said the other day about the saying, 'Happy is the nation without a history?' Such a set of folks as you have been talking about would n't have any history that could be written; or, if there was any, it would be such a dull affair that even you could n't read it! No; I like the good old days of chivalry. How splendid it would be to live in a castle and be a knight, with no end of followers, and then go gaily riding off to the wars!"

"I should like it all but the wars, said Alice. "The living in the castle, now, would be beautiful, wouldn't it? A plenty of nice little maidens to do all the disagreeable

things—the sweeping and dusting and sewing and such things—and nothing to do yourself but to embroider and play on the harp, and go riding out with such a knight as you, for instance, into the ‘good greenwood!’ I’d have a milk-white steed, Harry, and you should have a great coal-black charger, and we’d ride away some time on a sweet June morning, just as the day was breaking. There should n’t be anybody with us—just you and me. We’d tell the rest of the people, the night before, that they need n’t be surprised if we were gone all day; and we’d have some of the servants up early to give us a beautiful little breakfast; and I should have my maid up to dress me. My! How nice it would be not to have to comb my own hair! And you would want a servant to take care of the horses, and have them fed and saddled; and then they would stand at the door, and be so gay and restless till we came down the winding-stairs and spoke to them. Then they’d be like that noble Bayard in the ‘Lady of the Lake;’ and Alice quoted, in her graceful, spirited

“Stand, Bayard, stand ! The steed obeyed,
With arching neck, and bended head,
And glancing eye, and quivering ear,
As if he loved his lord to hear !”

At this point Harry shut up the book, and, being a Young American, put his feet up on the back of a neighboring chair, settled himself comfortably, clasped his hands over the top of his head, and said, “That’s first-rate, so far ; go on !” So Alice went on.

“The morning should be just as glorious as sunshine and flower-fragrance and bird-music could make it. A lark—a real English lark—how I wish I could hear one !—should be singing away up in the sky. Then you would say to your servant, ‘Look well after my hounds to-day.’ And I would say to the pretty page who held my bridle, ‘Take good care of my pet falcon ;’ and then we would canter away down the long, smooth road till we came to the great gate by the porter’s lodge, and he would hasten out to open the gate, while his wife would stand courtesying in the door. How patronizingly you would bow, and how gra-

ciously I would smile, would'nt we, Harry? And that reminds me we wouldn't have to change our names at all. You could be Harold and I Alice, just as we are now—that comes of having nice old English names!

“Then you would say, ‘Now which way shall we go to-day, Alice?’ And I would say, ‘Oh, to the sea, by all means!’ So we would take the winding river road, and ride gaily along under the great oak trees, sometimes drawing the rein and stopping on a grassy knoll long enough to rest the horses, and give us an opportunity to enjoy the lovely scenery, and to watch the flowing of the beautiful river. Then on again, through shade and sunshine, as free and joyous as the wild birds overhead! Sometimes we should meet gay cavalcades of knights and ladies, with whom we would have bright little visits, and then sometimes we should meet some grave, solitary knight, who would only bow in stately fashion, and to whom we would be just as gravely courteous. So the long bright morning hours would fly away, and the shadows would begin to point

the other way, while we still rode on and on towards the sea."

"What would we do for dinner?" dryly inquired Harry, "I should be awfully hungry!"

"Oh, you dreadful boy! Couldn't we find in the forest some nice little cottage, all over-run with roses, where we could dismount and go in, and astonish the simple people with our grand airs? Then you could say, 'My good dame, will you set before us whatever you may happen to have that two hungry travelers could eat?' And she would hurry and bring out milk and a brown loaf, and we would enjoy the simple fare hugely, and as we rose to go I would say, as I drew out my purse of netted silk, 'Since we have made an inn of your pretty cottage, good friends, you must let us leave you a token of our gratitude,' and with that I would give the woman a great gold piece, and we should have to hurry away to escape their overwhelming thankfulness!"

"Then the river would widen, and we would hear far away the roaring of the sur, till by and by we would spring off from our saddles

and leave our horses to feed in the shade, while we climbed up the great cliffs that overhang the sea. The sea, Harry! only think, the great billowy sea!" and Alice's eyes really looked as if they were feasting on what she had all her life dreamed about, but had never seen—the grand old ocean.

"There should be here and there a fisherman's boat," she went on, "and far off a great ship with its white sails all spread; and we would sit down on the rocks and look, and look, and look, and not talk, for ever and ever so long."

"That would be very severe on you," said Harry.

"No, it wouldn't, Master Harry, not if the sea was stretching away before me! But don't you keep interrupting me, or I shall talk all the afternoon, and not give you a chance to spin that yarn that I know is just waiting for me to get through with mine!"

"Oh, pray go on!" said Harry, meekly.

"Well," she resumed, "after we had watched the sea a long, long while, you would say,

‘Come, Alice, we really must tear ourselves away ; it will be late in the evening now before we can get back to our castle ;’ and then I would reluctantly turn away, and once more, with your help, spring lightly on to my snowy palfrey, and go bounding homeward. Our ride should be even more beautiful than in the morning, for by and by the great full moon should come up and turn the river to silver and beautiful stars would shine through the overarching trees, and here and there a lovely nightingale would flood the air with her music, and we would drink repose

‘ From the cool cisterns of the midnight air.’ ”

“ I should get dreadfully sleepy, I know,” said Harry.

“ Well, I guess I should too,” laughed Alice. “ And we’re almost home, don’t you see ? There, in the moonlight, shine the grey arches and gables, the turrets and towers, and gayly illuminated windows of our castle, and now we are there, and the servants run out to take

our horses as we come clattering up, and our friends welcome us in the great hall. Then we run lightly up the great oaken staircase, and go to our own rooms to change our riding-habits for evening dresses"—

"Why, it would be midnight when we got home," said Harry.

"Oh, never mind!" said Alice, a little impatiently, "we wouldn't want to eat supper in our riding habits, and you would be so prodigiously hungry, you know. I've a great mind to describe my darling little room in the castle's eastern tower"—

"Please don't!" cried Harry. "If you only knew what a splendid plan I'm aching to unfold!"

"Well, I'll tell you about that lovely little chamber some other time, then," she answered, "and we'll hurry down to supper now. Of course it would be all waiting for us in the great wainscoted dining-room.

"A great venison pasty would be the right thing for me," suggested Harry.

"Yes, to be sure," said Alice; "a venison

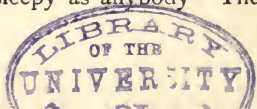
pasty and a flagon of ale for Sir Harold, and a broiled pheasant for Lady Alice!

"Then, after a little, we and our guests would be ready to have candles brought, and we would go leisurely up the winding-stairs and through the long corridors, in little groups of two or three, and bid our friends good-night at the doors of their rooms, and then I suppose you would go straight to bed, Harry, but I should sit down by some great oriel window in the moonlight, and"—

"Make verses to the moon, I suppose," said Harry; "but I hope you wouldn't keep your poor little maid sitting up waiting to help you undress."

"Well, I guess I should be about as considerate of our servants as you would be, my lord! Of course I should say very sweetly to her, 'Ethel, you may go to bed now, if you are sleepy;' but truly Harry, I don't see how anybody ever could be sleepy who lived in a castle!"

"Pshaw," said Harry, contemptuously. "You'd be just as sleepy as anybody. The



only difference would be you would be sleepy in the morning instead of at night !”

Alice laughingly waived the question, and cuddling down among the sofa pillows, said, “Now, it’s your turn, Harry.”

“It’s just aggravating to think what we should have done, and how we should have lived, in those old, dead and gone times,” said Harry, “but there’s plenty of fun to be got out of our modern life. I’ll tell you what we’ll do by and by, Alice. We’ll go on our ‘travels,’ as the young gentlemen used to do in the old fashioned stories. And we won’t go in any such humdrum way as going on the cars—we’ll fly !”

Alice opened her blue eyes very wide and just said, “Ah?” with an inquiring accent.

“Yes,” answered Harry, positively, “of course, we’ll fly. You don’t suppose we’ve come to the end of modern inventions, do you? By the time we get through with college and the law school—”

Alice laughed merrily. Henry always said “we” when he was talking about his future

studies. He and Alice always had studied together—why shouldn't they continue to do so?

So he said again, emphatically, "By the time *we* get through with our studies, and get our fortune made"——

"How will we make it?" asked Alice, with an appearance of entire confidence in Harry's powers of divination.

"I declare," said Harry, "you interrupt me constantly. I was just going to tell you. We'll get hold of some great international law-suit between Mexico and the United States, or Cuba and Spain, or Japan and China—who knows?—And the Emperors, or Presidents, or Tycoons, or what not, will appreciate our distinguished services so highly that they will vote us a half a million of dollars, and give us a pressing invitation to make them a visit!"

"Certainly," said Alice, "that looks reasonable!"

'Well,' resumed Harry, "it will be a dozen years or so from now, and by that time people will consider railroad traveling a kind of a

bore. Every body will own a nice little flying machine. There'll be small ones for individuals or private families, and larger ones for public conveyance, and magnificent ones owned by sovereigns and such grandees as you and me."

"You and I," corrected Alice. "We must cultivate the greatest elegance of speech, with such a career before us."

"I think, on the whole," Harry went on, blushing a little under the insinuated reproof, "it will be the Tycoon of Japan who will send us one of his flowery epistles, inviting us, 'the great and wise and honorable representatives of the legal learning of the West, to honor with a visit his ignorant and inferior self, and his humble and insignificant realm in the far East'—that's about their style, isn't it, Alice? And how will we go? Across the Atlantic and then over Europe and Asia? Or westward, across our own country and the Pacific?"

"Well," said Alice, musingly, "I can't quite make up my mind." There's everything to

make one want to go to Europe, and I'm sure I'd like just to fly over Asia, but then there's our own glorious country, with the Rocky Mountains; and just think of California with its Yo-Semite Valley, and the Sandwich Islands. Dear me, how hard it is to decide!

"Why, how stupid we are!" exclaimed Harry, suddenly. "We could go one way and come home the other, and so go round the world!"

"Of course!" said Alice, evidently very much relieved.

"Well, we would take time enough to get entirely ready—ourselves, and our servants, and our beautiful chariot."

"I'd trust you for that," said Alice, smiling; "*getting ready* is your forte, Harry."

"Exactly," said Harry, "and it's a great gift. After we were thoroughly ready, as I said, we would start"—

"Take me wiz you," pleaded little Rose, coming out of dream-land, whither she had voyaged when Alice was galloping home to her castle.

"Why, birdie," said Alice, "are you awake? A penny for your dreams! I covered you up here on the sofa half an hour ago."

But Rosa only rubbed her sleepy eyes, and said again, "Take me wiz you, Harry."

"Of course, I will," said Harry. "We'll take you 'wiz' us as far as grandmother's, in New Hampshire, and leave you to blossom in her garden, while we go sight-seeing in Boston and New York. By that time mamma would get so lonely that she would come flying after you, and carry her little Rose home again."

"Dear me! Harry," cried Alice, "what a story-teller you are! Do you suppose our baby is going to grow any in the next score of years? I wonder where and how and what you *will* be then, little Rosy my posy!"

"Now, Alice, don't you start off again—I've got the floor," said Harry. "Let Rosa run out to mother. Don't you want to know how our airy vehicle will look? It will be a sort of canoe, with wing-like oars, and we'll have a great gold American eagle for the prow. Ours

shall be lined with blue velvet; your hair and eyes look so nicely when you have blue about you, you know; and we'll have a silken canopy to protect us from the sun."

"What'll we do when it rains?" asked Alice,

"Oh, we won't travel when it rains, or when the weather is disagreeable in any way. We'll plan to be in Paris or in Italy in the winter, and you know we can any time have our little craft transported by railroad."

"Of course," said Alice. "But do let us decide on a name for our flying boat."

So they were both plunged in meditation for a few moments.

"How would 'Carrier Dove' do?" said Alice.

"It wouldn't go very well with our figure head," objected Harry. "Oh, now I have it!" he cried, "'Aquila' is the very thing—that's the Latin for Eagle, you know.

"We'd spend a month in Switzerland. How splendid it would be just to float up the side of Mont Blanc like a cloud, instead of toiling up with an Alpen-stock!"

"We will be sure and go to Egypt, too," said Alice. "We can be so independent of those dreadful Arabs. They have always been such a terror to me, I was afraid I should never see the Pyramids."

"Yes, certainly," answered Harry, promptly; "guides and guide-books and beggars and dragomans would find their occupation gone."

"Let us be sure and visit Palestine," said Alice.

"Oh, yes," said Harry; "the tourists always 'do' the Holy Land after Egypt, don't they? But then we won't do just as every body else does. We'll go branching off into highways and by-ways, and we'll go to the Vale of Cashmere, and camp out on the Himalaya Mountains, and visit the court of 'the White Elephant,' and follow the windings of the Chinese Wall, stopping over night in some of the little odd, out-of-the-way, thousand-year-old towns"——

"I do wish you'd go into details more," said Alice. "Do you suppose the Mandarins would invite us to tea-drinkings, and that they

would get up some kind of a grand kite-flying and paper-lantern celebration over us, all through the Flowery Kingdom?"

"To be sure," said Harry, gravely, "but I'm going into the particulars when we get to Japan. We'll send couriers on before us, to give the Tycoon a chance to get his grand preparations made, and then some lovely summer day we'd go leisurely floating into Jeddo with our beautiful Aquila in holiday dress; our pennons gay with colored silk streamers, and our great eagle"——

"Harry," called Mrs. Leonard, in a voice having more than a faint suggestion of laughter in it, "Rosa left the door ajar when she came out, and I've been having the benefit of your English history for the last few moments. It seems to me your author has a singular way of straying off from his subject!"

"Now, mother, I should think there was enough of eaves-dropping out of doors to-day," answered Harry. "It was a little piece of prospective history I was reading!"

"Something that will be very useful to you

in connection with your next week's History lessons, I dare say," said the mother, in a slightly ironical tone. "But I shall have to interrupt your studying now. Alice, dear, it is almost dark, but I will sit right down to the stitching, if you have the hems ready."

"Oh, mother!" cried Alice, in a dismayed voice, "I had no idea it was so late. It is too bad—I'm ever so sorry—but I haven't turned a single hem!"

Then there was perfect silence for a minute. Mrs. Leonard never scolded. But although they were quite out of each other's sight, Alice could see her mother's disappointed look, and Mrs. Leonard saw just as plainly her daughter's blushing, conscience-smitten face.

"Oh, Harry!" bemoaned Alice, "don't you wish we could manage to think more about now, and a little less about by and by?"





VII.

MR. AND MRS. LEONARD IN COUNCIL.

THAT same rainy Saturday evening, Mr Leonard came home a little earlier than usual from his office, and was warmly welcomed by all the household. Rosa to be sure was tucked up in her crib, when the unwonted stir and excitement, consequent upon this unlooked for advent of the father, made her blue eyes spring open very suddenly; and then nothing would do but papa must come in and have a nice little explanatory conversation with her.

“Why! What *am* you come home for, papa? Will you 'tay home, now?”

“Yes, little one. I'm going to 'tay' all

night. It rains so that the folks are all glad to stay in their houses, and so there was no one to keep me from finishing my writing, and as soon as I got through, I put up my big umbrella and ran home."

"Oh, how nice! I wis' I was up, but I 'pose I can't. Don't you wis' it would rain always, papa?"

"Why, what a pale little Rose-bud it would be, if the sun never shone! Now let papa cover you over, and do you shut your little peepers right up, and to-morrow is Sunday, you know; we'll have a beautiful time."

Thus consoled, she curled down again, and Mr. Leonard went back to the delighted family group. Johnny and Will were just toasting their toes preparatory to running up-stairs, but now drew on their boots again, and made a successful appeal for another half hour. Harry hung up the damp overcoat, and carried the dripping umbrella out into the wood-house, and spread it to dry; while Alice wheeled up the easy chair, and put the slippers conveniently near.

"Now, papa, let me have your rubbers," said Johnny.

"And here's the boot-jack," said Will, eager to do something as well as the rest.

"I declare," said the pleased father, sinking into the easy chair, "I believe it's about as nice to be a tired-out old miller, with a lot of good boys and girls, as to be a nobleman with a retinue of servants."

Then there was such a chattering of little tongues, and such an overflow of hilarious young spirits, that there was a little danger of the father's changing the self-gratulatory opinion he had just expressed. But the good mother wisely foresaw the danger, and managed to get the younger boys off to bed at the appointed time. Harry and Alice quite monopolized him for another half hour with questions and plans, and all the eager enthusiastic talk which bright, unrestrained children of their age always are ready to pour forth. Alice had perched herself on the arm of his chair, with her arm about his neck, while Harry had drawn his chair up close on the

other side. I haven't a doubt they could have kept up the most brilliant flow of conversation till midnight. But again the mother came to the rescue, as the clock struck nine.

"Now, my Gemini, you have had about your share of your father. I'm going to assert my claims. Do you run right off to bed like the good children you are, and leave us to ourselves for a little while."

"Yes, children," said Mr. Leonard, smiling, "you really must try to check this flow of young ideas. Think what a fearful thing it would be for you to get 'talked out.'"

Thus urged, Alice reluctantly abandoned her position. She had not forgotten her afternoon's shortcomings, and really meant to do everything to show her mother that she was not so inconsiderate as she had seemed. Harry, too, made a desperate effort, and started quite promptly after a night lamp. Then, with loving kisses, and kind good-nights, they went away from the bright fireside, and ran lightly up to their own pleasant chambers

leaving the father and mother to that rarely enjoyed luxury, a quiet talk to themselves.

Mrs. Leonard drew her low rocker up nearer her husband's chair, and said, with a world of motherly tenderness in her look and voice, 'The darling children!'

"Yes," echoed the father, emphatically, "the darling children! But I thought there was just a little cloud on your brow to-night, my dear, and I know if I should ask you what it meant, you would surely answer, 'Oh, a little trouble about the children!'"

Mrs. Leonard smiled. "Yes," she said, "it is a foregone conclusion, that if there are clouds on your brow, 'it is only matters at the mill;' but if they are on mine, 'it's just the children.'"

"I feel positively guilty, to think I do not help you more about these little folks," said the father; "but I am so entirely, and it does seem necessarily, absorbed in my business, and I have such unbounded confidence in you, Margaret, that I can scarcely resist the temptation to trust all their training and manage-

ment to their good mother. But is there any thing in particular that worries you? Who knows but that, at least, I might give some good advice?"

"You help me more than you know, John," said Mrs. Leonard. "Your advice is always invaluable, and you know you are our Supreme Court, from whose decisions there is no appeal! But the most important help of all, is your always good example. I am sure our children will never go far astray while I can have for one of my invariable precepts, 'Do as your father does.'"

"What an indulgent critic!" said Mr. Leonard. "I wish I might always be judged as charitably. But tell me, my dear, what has gone wrong to day. Some carelessness of Harry's, is it? Or some mad-cap performance of our youngest boy?"

"Oh, I'm not going to tell tales," she answered, cheerfully. "Don't you know I never entertain you in that way? I don't doubt you see enough of the children's short-comings without any help. I am very glad that

my boys and girls do not stand in any such awe of their father as to make them at all different in his absence from what they are in his presence. Whatever faults they have, they are not eye-servants.

"But I cannot help being troubled often with a fear that Alice's dreaminess, and Harry's dilatoriness, and Johnny's—well—haziness, I guess, is the right word—and Will's recklessness, will bring sorrow to themselves and us. As to Rosa, bless her dear little heart, we are all doing our utmost to spoil her, aren't we?"

"That's a formidable catalogue, surely," said the father, "I know I'm one of the chief offenders in petting Rosa, but I wouldn't trouble myself about her much, my dear, till she is a little older, or the temptation to let her have her 'own sweet will' is a little less irresistible."

Mrs. Leonard shook her head doubtfully. "Then we shall be saying that her willfulness is part of her nature, just as we do now about Harry's dilatoriness," she said. "But

that is what I want to talk to you about, particularly. Is there anything we can do? I fear I am too indulgent to him. Indeed, John, notwithstanding all the nice things you say about me, I'm a miserable disciplinarian. I know I am, and there is no use trying to disguise the fact from myself. It is dreadfully up-hill work with me to take any rigorous decided measures with the children, or anybody else. Some people are born to rule, I suppose, but I certainly was not blessed with any such power. It is extremely easy for me to laugh or to cry; and coaxing—now I think I have quite a gift at that!—but real governing ability—it is not there," she said ruefully, touching her well-shaped head. "I'm not in the least like that centurion who said to his servant, 'Do this, and he doeth it.' My servant would say, 'by and by,' and then forget it!"

"I suppose you want me to admit all your positions," said Mr. Leonard, "and I'll try to be as undisputatious as may be, so I'll grant that you are a very gentle little sovereign and not the least in the world despotic."

“Well, my prime minister, or prince consort, or whatever you please to call yourself, must try and make up somewhat for my deficiencies,” she answered. “You must help me make some laws, and *enforce* them. That’s the main point with me, John. Was it Webster who said, that ‘Eternal Vigilance is the price of Liberty?’ It certainly is the price of good family government. I’m quite gifted at making plans and regulations—its the *enforcing* them—‘Ay, there’s the rub!’ I’m so apt to forget myself, or not to notice, and then it is hard to deal severely with the first offence, and then how quickly the rule becomes a dead letter.”

“I must try to come to the rescue,” said her husband; “but I, too, am very ‘apt to forget, or not to notice.’ My thoughts are away off, not exactly wool-gathering, but, perhaps, wheat-gathering. I very much fear too, that Alice is not any more dreamy than her father. I have never really got my imagination well into the traces. The only difference is, that as I have grown older, I

have learned to let it roam more in wheat fields, and less in the realms of poesy. My day dreams are less flowery in one sense, certainly; but they are very *floury* still!" They both laughed merrily, and then Mrs. Leonard began again her self-accusations.

"I can sympathize with Harry's laziness better than you imagine, John!"

Her husband looked at her comically. "The most inveterately industrious little woman I know of!" he said.

"Yes," she went on, in spite of the contradiction, "I'm dreadfully lazy! Of course, I work as busy as a bee from morning till night, but I work on *principle*—I don't like to."

"What a triumph of principle!" said Mr. Leonard.

"Ah, you don't believe me, but, I tell you, it is so. How could one help being idle and self-indulgent who had the early training that I had—brought up by a doting maiden aunt, with plenty of money, and deeply imbued with the old aristocratic English notion that ladies must not soil their white fingers! I was ad

alone, too, and so never had to feel any care or responsibility about younger brothers and sisters. There was only Harold, and he was older, you know, and always kept away from home at school. I never knew anything about hurry or worry.

“ ‘I slept and dreamed that life was beauty ;’ and, I assure you, I had a very hard time of it when ‘I woke and found that life was duty.’

“ No one can ever know, except from bitter experience, what such an awakening means. My poor aunt died, and the ‘riches took to themselves wings.’ Harold, you know was at West Point, and I insisted he should remain there. I was sure I could take care of myself. Then I did begin to work ; but what habits of idleness I had to break up ! How I had to unlearn all my easy, careless ways ! It was a very ignorant and inexperienced school-ma’am that that easy ‘committee-man’ let take the reins of the district school in Haddam, and I did not govern my scholars any, I know. I only ‘managed’ them a little ; it was just so with my music-scholars—I *wheedled* them

through the Instruction-book,—and then you found me,” she went on, half sadly, in spite of her husband’s smiling face; “and a very poor wife and mother I fear I have been.”

“Now, I will not hear another word of such slanderous talk,” Mr. Leonard said, with an air of great decision. “I like your style of ‘managing,’ as you call it, exceedingly well, myself; and I think the children do you a great deal of credit, if they do have some failings. If you are dilatory and self-indulgent by nature or education, the grace of God, and the discipline of life have removed every trace of it. Perhaps you can have some dim recollection of such a state of mind and body as our Harry is so often afflicted with; but I don’t believe the most discerning phrenologist could find even a trace of those bumps—whatever they may be—left on your head!

“When I look back at my own overworked childhood,” Mr. Leonard went on, “it fairly makes my bones ache. That stony, old New Hampshire farm, where my brothers and I hoed potatoes and corn from dawn till dark, or

climbed up to the hill-side pasture after cows and sheep! I can never feel quite reconciled to that fettered boyish life. We were so dreadfully poor, and I was such a poetic, visionary, aspiring boy! It was very hard. Yet I had the very best of fathers and mothers; and, if they did require a great deal of us, they tasked themselves still more. If we were compelled to get up and eat breakfast by candle-light, we always knew our dear mother had been up still an hour earlier. If our young hands were rough and hard, father's were fairly horny with toil. Those large-jointed, unshapely hands of my poor old father! No one knows, Margaret, what a delight it is to me to feel that I have been able to furnish the means, during these latter years of his life, to relieve those dear old hands from all labor except that which is a mere pleasure.

"But, as I was saying, when I look back to my childhood and youth, it seems so cramped that I feel a double joy in my boys' free glad life. I used to resolve that, if the thing were possible, my children should have leisure for

books and for *play*—that if one of them loved Art or Poetry, I would help instead of hinder him. And I thank God I can carry out my resolution ; but, like a great many other good purposes, I know there is a possibility of going too far. We are all such extremists naturally.

“ I agree with you entirely, my dear, that we need to hold a little tighter rein. I will try to be a little more rigid with Harry and the younger boys. Alice is just about right as she is, I’m sure ; and, as to Rosa, I’ll promise solemnly not to spoil her any more than I can help !”

And so that little domestic council came to an end. Mrs. Leonard went around the room “straightening” things for a few moments. Then she came and stood by her husband’s chair.

“ I am going to redouble my efforts, John,” she said, kissing his forehead, “and may Heaven help us both !”



VIII.

A SUNDAY'S EXPERIENCE.

SUNDAY was not exactly a day of rest to Mrs. Leonard. So many little people to get ready for church—so many needful home affairs to be looked after—so many Sabbath-school lessons to be perfected, and her own rapid toilet to be made, all before ten o'clock in the morning. There never were busier head and hands and feet than her's were every Sunday morning. Directly after breakfast the hurry began, and breakfast was very apt to be late on Sundays—they were all so tired! It always would be eight o'clock before breakfast was over.

The particular Sabbath about which I am going to tell, because Harry's peculiar traits, with their inevitable results, were very conspicuous on that day, was one which came in the Spring, very soon after the days described in the previous chapter. It was a lovely May morning, and the family were, as usual, all well and cheerful. They sang at prayers, "Welcome, sweet day of rest;" and if Mrs. Leonard could not exactly adopt that language, there was much in the hymn to which she found a very warm response in her heart.

After prayers, she began to issue her orders, like the brisk little commander-in-chief that she was. "Now, Alice, hurry and attend to things up stairs, and then, perhaps, you will have time to help me a little before you have to get ready for church."

"Oh, mother," said Alice, "I must study my Sabbath-school lesson every minute till I go to church!" and away she ran up stairs with Barnes' Notes in her hand.

"Well, Harry, you had better get ready as quickly as you can, and then attend to your

lessons," Mrs. Leonard said, turning to Harry, who had settled himself on the sofa with a book, as if he had all day before him.

"Yes, mother." But he went right on with his reading, thinking to himself, no doubt, that there would be plenty of time to attend to those little matters by and by.

"Come, Johnny and Will, mother will hear your lessons now," and the boys went with her into her own room so as to be undisturbed. It was fully half an hour before "Will-o'-the-Wisp" had got the ideas contained in the lesson really impressed on his very unimpressible brains. Then another half hour was spent by the mother putting on carefully the Sunday suits, and looking after all the minutiae of their toilets; and very presentable little fellows they were as she ushered them into the parlor, and put them under their father's care, with the injunction to them to "sit still and keep out of all mischief." But she was not one of those inconsiderate people who expect children to sit still with nothing to do, so she supplied each with an interesting book, and a nice seat

at the table. Mr. Leonard had been resting in his easy-chair, and having a charming visit with little Rosa, who was perched on his knee, but now mamma carried her off to be dressed for church. She had only just begun to go, and really went, not so much for profit as she did for convenience, as some one always had to stay at home with her. She very readily took mamma's hand, and was led away, for dear to her little feminine heart were her white dress and buttoned boots! As Mrs. Leonard turned, her eye fell on Harry, still gracefully recumbent, in slippers and everyday jacket, and with the Sabbath-school book still riveting his attention.

"Why, my son," she said, "have n't you your lesson to learn?"

"Yes, mother," he answered, sitting up and rubbing his eyes—"there's time enough, is n't there?"

"Time enough!" she said. "Yes, if you can learn your lesson in fifteen minutes! You know it always takes you half an hour to dress."

Now Harry's lesson was one that required careful study. It was the twenty-fourth chapter of Acts, and he knew that his teacher would come well prepared, and would expect his class to be so too. He went up stairs two steps at a time, and tapped at Alice's door to get the Barnes' Notes. "I'll tell you what, Harry," she said, as she handed him the book, "there's a great deal in that chapter."

Harry thought so too, when he got fairly into its merits, and he read and studied, and looked out references, and really was very much interested—when—What was that? The last bell! And Harry knew that within thirty seconds his father would call him to go with the family to church, and would be very much displeased with him for being late. There it was now—"Harry! Harry! We are all ready."

He felt desperate—kicked off his slippers, and commenced unbuttoning his jacket. No that would never do! He must just go to the top of the stairs and answer as best he might; so thither he went.

"I can't go, father; I have n't even begun to get ready. I did n't know it was so late."

They were all standing right at the door—every one was entirely ready but our hero. Mr. Leonard's patience gave out. If there was anything in the world he was perfectly exemplary about, it was being at church in season. None of his household ever came creaking or rustling up the church aisle ten minutes after the service began, to distract the attention or disturb the devotions of the congregation. And he was equally particular about having all his family at church. He was very seriously disturbed by this constantly-recurring trouble with Harry, but he did not speak crossly, only very decidedly—

"Put on your boots, my son, and get your hat, and come just as you are!"

Harry knew it was a decree that there would be no use in resisting. Delay would only make him more conspicuous; so he did just as he was told, but with what a disturbed spirit! How at variance with the calm, sweet sunshine—the chiming of the bells—the peace-

ful influence which seemed to rest, like a benediction, on all the earth! He felt as if there never was such a hardly-used boy. Yes, for a little while—only a very little while, I am glad to say—our Harry was full of resentment towards his kind and dearly-loved father!

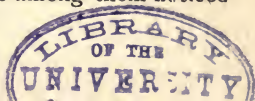
How exquisitely nice all the rest of the family looked! How scrupulously brushed, and perfectly in order his father seemed, from the top of his glossy hat to the toes of his polished boots! And there was his dear mother, who had had so much to disturb and hurry her, but who looked as serene as the May morning, only there were two little bright red spots on her usually colorless cheeks; and she did not look at Harry at all, which was entirely unlike herself. There was no fault or flaw in the younger boys' appearance. Little Rosa was perfectly charming in her prettiness; while Alice—dear Alice, who quietly took her place at Harry's side as if nothing had occurred different from their usual Sabbath morning's experience—it seemed as if she had never looked so lovely! Mrs

Leonard was not one of those foolish—I had almost said wicked—people who think the house of God the most desirable place wherein to parade their showy dresses and finery. But she was an exceedingly refined and tasteful lady, and she had trained all her children in habits of perfect neatness; and Alice's toilet, though very simple, was a model of beauty and fitness. She looked as fresh and sweet, and unconsciously beautiful, as the little bunch of anemones and spring-beauties she held in her nicely-gloved hand. Harry looked at her as they hastened along, and oh, he did feel so distressingly soiled and shabby!

For our Harry was just a little inclined to be foppish. He was really very handsome, and it is just possible that his mother had said too often to him, "Go and brush your hair my boy." Whenever he brushed his hair, he stood before the mirror, of course! Perhaps, too, his father had been a little too indulgent in the way of tailor's bills. He certainly did like to see his fine-looking boy becomingly and even handsomely dressed. But whatever

the causes were, Harry was a little over anxious about his personal appearance, and probably very few boys would have felt more disturbed than he by this most unlooked-for decision about going to church. The truth was he did not look so much like the prodigal son as he thought he did. His clothes were those he had worn to school for several months, and they were considerably faded, and somewhat worn. Neither did he look utterly unwashed and uncombed. I have seen some boys in full dress, whose hair and skin betrayed less care; but Harry was used to such a different order of things, that it did seem to him there never was such a shabby, faded, threadbare, soiled, unbrushed, unwashed object as he then was. Tears of distress and mortification stood in his eyes, and it took all the manly efforts he was capable of to force them back.

They passed groups of well-dressed, bright-looking people—friends and neighbors—with whom they exchanged pleasant bows and salutations. I doubt if one among them noticed



Harry's predicament, but it seemed to him as if he was the observed of all observers. That is a mistake we are all apt to make, and which gives us such a world of trouble—this imagining that other people are thinking about us!

They went into church, up the long aisle, into Mr. Leonard's pew, which was near the front. Oh, how Harry wished they were Quakers, and he could keep his hat on, and not get up unless he was moved to do so! And oh, how he wished that that teasing Joe Myers, with his pretty sister, had not been seated right behind him!

That was a fearfully long service to Harry, and I do not think he was much profited by the sermon, but it was a most useful season of reflection. The more he thought about the whole affair, the fainter grew his resentment towards his father, and the more clearly did he see the real cause of his trouble. His conscience was fairly awake at last, and it seemed to him as if a panorama moved before his eyes in which he was himself the principle figure

They were pictures of memory, and the scenes were those in which his selfish, careless, dilatory habits had brought disgrace and sorrow to himself and his friends. He had never seen himself in any such light before; indeed, he had always banished all such unpleasant trains of reflection. Alice, glancing at him from under her long lashes, thought she had never seen him so sad and troubled, and her own face grew as sorrowful. His mother looked at him, too, and although she was full of motherly sympathy, she gathered hope for the future from the fact that he really looked serious. Hardly ever before had she seen any look on his face but one of careless gaiety.

Sabbath-school came directly after church, and the family all remained except Mrs. Leonard and Rosa. Little Rosa missed Harry's usual bright smile as she passed him, and commented on it, "Does your toof ache, Harry?" The "toof-ache" was about the only ill to which she had ever known Harry really succumb. He tried to smile; put his hand on her moist and somewhat tumbled curls, (she

had been fast asleep with her head in Alice's lap for a full hour,) and then hurried into the Sunday-school room.

There was "that teasing Joe Myers" in the class, already waiting for him.

"Halloo, Harry, what's to pay? Did you know your hair wasn't parted *quite* so exactly down the middle of the back as usual? What's happened to your new suit?" This was the young man's pleasant greeting.

Harry's ready wit came to his aid, and he answered promptly—

"Your mother borrowed my clothes to see what under the sun ailed yours to make them fit so!"

Then their teacher, Mr. Roberts, came in, and bowed to the boys with a kind, cheerful smile. The boys were all very much attached to him, and he had one of the best and most interesting classes in the school. There was no more whispering or moving. The Superintendent turned the card with the words, "I am late," on it, towards the door, and the exercises began. Mr. Roberts was animated and

original in his manner of teaching, and very soon even Harry forgot everything but the fascinating story of Paul. He was no longer in the pleasant modern room, with the young eager faces all around him, but far away in the old Judean city, in Herod's judgment hall, listening to the polished Roman lawyer, and to Paul's noble defence. He could see them all. Felix, with his air of lofty condescension, the beautiful Drusilla, the servile courtiers, the angry, scoffing Jews, and Paul. Paul more royal than any king, more eloquent than any Roman orator—too serene in his conscious rectitude to be troubled by the clamor and hatred of any crowd—too zealous in the cause of right to be afraid to preach "righteousness, temperance and judgment to come," to any audience!

Mr. Roberts grew very earnest and personal in his remarks when they came to the latter part of the chapter, where the character of Felix was more particularly shown. Poor, undecided, sin-loving, dilatory Felix! Harry thought he knew just how he came to let that

disagreeable business of repentance and reformation slip along to a "more convenient season." He had done so himself many a time. Mr. Roberts' earnest words fell this time on an awakened conscience.

"I will begin to-day," Harry said to himself, as he went slowly homeward; "I will begin *to-day* to be a more careful, prompt, earnest kind of a boy. I will try to get rid of my 'by-and-by-iveness,'" and silently, but very fervently, he asked for Heavenly help—the help that is never, never refused.

Alice was by his side, very wisely silent. Usually, as they walked together, there was an unintermitting flow of youthful talk. It was quite a wonder that they never seemed to get "talked out," but they never did, and very innocently gay young talk it generally was, having for its subject their whole little world-full of interests and excitements. On Sunday it was toned down a little by the sweet influences of the sacred time, but even then it was like the brook Mr. Tennyson sings about, "going on forever!" So it was very

noticeable to-day that Harry and Alice walked home side by side, but without speaking.

Some quaintly beautiful author has said, "Speech is silvern, but silence is golden." This may sometimes need a word of qualification, but it certainly held true on this occasion. Harry's thoughts were more profitable than any "speech" that could possibly have been made, and Alice, who was a true little woman for quick discernment, was well aware of this, and so was purposely still. Yet I assure you, she did not look sanctimonious, or self-righteous, or even reproachful. As Harry caught glimpses of her face, it simply looked kind and sisterly, and with a little more of the Sabbath-calm in it than usual. And Harry's own face was by no means a sullen or even a miserable one. The Leonards were never given to that most detestable of children's vices—sulkiness. They were quite as ready to be grieved, or even to be angry, as common children; but to go off by themselves to brood over their injuries, whether real or fancied, was a thing unknown. Neither was their

family circle ever ornamented for a great while at a time with a pouting or a frowning face. Their domestic storms were always of the thunder-shower character—very violent while they lasted, but clearing up speedily, and so effectually that the atmosphere seemed rather improved by them. The rainbow of a smile often breaking out beautifully right through the mists of their tears!

So now our dear Harry's countenance had been rueful enough, but not sullen, and as he and his sister walked homeward any one who met them would have said that he merely looked soberly cheerful. Perhaps one secret of it was that he knew there did not anything unpleasant wait for him at home. He would not be "in disgrace." He had been pretty severely disciplined, but there was the end of it. Perhaps there would be a little talk between him and his father by and by, but it would be entirely private, and would begin, he knew, with, "Harry, my dear boy."

Oh, it is so beautiful and so fraught with good results to have children know that, how-

ever they may have erred, and whatever may have been the punishment, they are still *dear* ! It saves a world of bitter, resentful feeling and estrangement ; it always brings the prodigals back to the father's house.

The nice Sunday dinner was waiting when Harry and Alice went in, and they sat down with such excellent appetites as children always do have for the Sunday dinner. No one would have known that anything unusual had occurred, unless the funny little wink that Will gave Harry had happened to be noticed. Will was an inveterate teaze, and frequently had to be dealt with for this offence ; so now, Mrs. Leonard, whose quick eye nothing escaped, though she frequently thought it best "not to see," caught the roguish twinkle, and sobered him with her own reproving glance.

After dinner, when Alice and her father were in the parlor, and the little boys were reading their Sunday-school papers and books on the piazza, Harry lay on a lounge in the dining-room reading, and his mother sat down beside him and ran her fingers softly through

his hair. If he should live to be an old man he will never forget the impress of that cool soft hand on his brow, the little caress that lurked in every touch of the fingers that threaded his hair.

"I was very sorry for you, my dear," she said; "but it was just right, wasn't it?"

"Yes, it was just right, mother, and I'm sorry that you were sorry; it was a kind of a sorry business. That's always the way I'm talking, you know; but this time I do believe I'm in earnest." Harry said this in a voice that had a little more depth to it than many of his confessions.

"I think all you have needed, Harry, was to see the wickedness of this bad habit of yours. I'm afraid we haven't any of us realized that enough," said the mother. "We are not quite conscious enough that these little faults are really serious matters, and day by day growing more serious."

So like the early dew fell her pleasant words of admonition on that tender young heart.

Later in the day Harry stood beside his

father's chair with his hand on his shoulder, and seemed waiting for some expected word or look; nor was he disappointed. The kind, fatherly eyes met his, and the voice he loved so well said :

“ ‘ Let the dead past bury its dead.
Act, act in the living present,
Heart within, and God o'er head ! ’ ”

Still later they had their usual “ Sabbath evening sing,” and, among other things, they sang “ Just Now.” It was a favorite with them all. There is such a charm in its sweet repetitions, that the most thoughtless child can hardly keep from joining in its musical refrain; but that night it had a new and deeper hold on Harry, and his clear, strong voice rang out as if he believed what he sang, and had resolved to act upon the sweet assurances “ just now.”

“ He will save you, He will save you,
He will save you just now,
Just now, He will save you,
He will save you just now,”

sang the young voices, and the mother prayed silently.



IX.

BAD HABITS AND BAD EXAMPLES.

IT has been said so many times, that it has fairly become a proverb, that there is no act of our lives but has its influence. Whatever we do has its effect on our own character, and on those which surround us; and each repetition of an act makes it easier to be done again. So it is as impossible to calculate just where the effect of a good or bad act will stop, as it is to set limits to the vibrations that are made in the atmosphere of the physical world.

The force of habit is a power in our moral being that we have all of us felt at times to be almost irresistible. And I suppose it is al-

most a miracle when one breaks up a bad habit instantly, by sheer force of will. So our friend Harry now found he had some iron bands to break. He sincerely intended now to be a prompt, diligent boy, and in every respect to please the friends who he knew would watch his efforts with such earnest and loving interest ; nor was he unmindful of the higher obligations to do right which he knew were resting upon him. He had asked help of One "who giveth to all men liberally," and he felt for the first time in his life a deep and abiding sense of that Heavenly love which could forgive all his past and guide all his future. Yet it took a long while to break up his old dilatory ways, and scarcely a day passed over his head when he did not discourage himself and his friends by falling back into some careless, listless, long-established way. His mother, however, who pondered all these things in her heart, saw that there was a radical change in him, and so waited patiently and hopefully for the perfect development of the "fruits of the Spirit." She knew there must be "first the

blade, then the ear, and afterwards the full corn in the ear," and was unspeakably thankful in the belief that the germ was there, silently but surely making progress.

The change was most perceptible in matters that involved self sacrifice for the comfort and happiness of others. He was beginning to be unselfish in little matters that he had once thought quite beneath his notice. He had always been a generous boy, willing to divide his "goodies" with his brothers and sisters, and he had been too well bred to be ever rude to the younger ones, or forgetful of the deference he owed to the older members of the household. He had always been quite a model about little courtesies of speech. His "If you please," and "Thank yous," were hardly ever inaudible or forgotten. He did not run heedlessly between people who were talking, or remain seated in that most attractive easy chair of his father's, when an older person came into the room; but all this was the result of the good breeding which was fairly incorporated with the Leonard children

Now, however, there was evidently a new principle at work. When he was asked to get a pitcher of fresh water, he did not say "Yes'm," and then go right on with what he was doing till he quite forgot the request; but rose up and went after it, as if he really thought somewhat of other people's comfort, and knew that it was often very disagreeable to go thirsty for half an hour, waiting for a boy to get entirely through with a chapter in his story-book.

He was more thoughtful and pains-taking about everything. Johanna noticed that he did not rush across her newly-washed floor, with unwiped boots; and loudly proclaimed her opinion with regard to his improvement.

"It's a foine stiddy lad you're growin' to be," she said; "an' now if ye'll jist try and tache that tearin' Will."

Mr. Grover discovered that Harry was a better scholar, and that his fun didn't bubble over in the wrong place and at the wrong time, as it had always been given to doing heretofore.

His schoolmates found that he was more kind and obliging, and he grew more popular than ever.

But it was at home that the change was principally felt and where it was most gladly welcomed. Yet there was many a time when he was just the same Harry as of old, when the old habits asserted their power, and he slid almost imperceptibly into the old grooves.

There were some bad habits, too, that required such a desperate effort to overcome, and there were some whose harmfulness he failed to realize, so that his friends did not find any such wonderful change as destroyed his identity. Harry Leonard was Harry Leonard still.

That delightful little nap which he had been in the habit of indulging in, after Johanna rang the rising bell in the morning—how could he give that up? It was so abrupt to break rudely into one's dreams, and to get right up, and go to work dressing in the prosiest way! It was ever so much more agreeable to lie a few moments and doze—at any rate, not be wide

enough awake to do any harder thinking than day-dreaming. He tried to satisfy his conscience about this little dereliction, with telling himself that by hurrying his toilet-making, or if need be, his breakfast-eating, he would still be through breakfast by the time the rest were.

It was slow work to undo the habit of saying "by and by," but it was slower still to undo the habit of thinking "by and by." It isn't in human nature to be always making an effort. "Man is a lazy animal," a distinguished Doctor of Divinity asserts, and we are none of us prepared to dispute his dogma. The best horse wearies going up hill, and we all know there is no going up hill that is quite such hard traveling as that we encounter in self-reformation. That is the "Hill Difficulty."

Harry had some ways which were a trial to his mother particularly, and that he would not for a moment think of defending in himself—ways which he had always purposed to lay aside "by and by," but that he very much enjoyed indulging in now. For instance, his

talk was plentifully sprinkled with Young American slang. Things were "jolly," and "gay," and "fast," and "slow." He was "hard up," and "flush." He told his young friends that they "couldn't come it," and assured them often that "he didn't see it." He was frequently "up a stump," and in other novel positions. If one of his Puritan ancestors had held a conversation with him, and he had not felt the need of being specially elegant in his language, I am sure the old gentleman would have needed a dictionary of slang, or an interpreter of some sort, to help him to a comprehension of the meaning of his young descendant! Mrs. Leonard was often very much annoyed by it. It did not strike her as witty, or brilliant, or original, but simply as vulgar and unmeaning; and although she had a keen sense of humor, and could laugh and joke in the gayest way with her children, she failed to appreciate this style of conversation, and disapproved of it entirely. But so dear was it to Harry's boyish heart, that he not only treasured up all he heard, but invent-

ed new forms of it. To be sure he tried to be a little select in his choice of slang terms when his mother or father was listening, but it would creep in, in some shape. Then his mother would say "What did you say, Harry?" and Harry would repeat his choice language. Then the next question would be, "Pray what does that mean?" and Harry, who was never at a loss for synonyms, would explain his meaning to his very dull questioner.

"Pray why didn't you say what you meant my son?" she would often reply. "Do you think you can ever be an elegant, or even a refined or graceful talker, while you use such terms?"

"O, no, mother, of course not! But you know I don't expect to be much of a conversationist just now. I'm going to be a perfect model by and by!"

"That will be a more difficult thing than you imagine. People can't make very short turns in their language or manners. Bad habits cling to one, you know," the mother said warningly, whenever her boy made these

fair promises for the future. But these warnings had never made a very deep impression, and he had let his tongue trip lightly along pretty much as it pleased.

Now that he had set about being a more truly obedient boy, he tried to "set a watch on the door of his lips," and found that all his mother had said was true. He could scarcely open his mouth for purposes of ordinary conversation, but out would slip some of these dainty phrases. It seemed to him as if it was really the work of some Spirit of Evil, but I think we can find sufficient explanation of the fact in the way we become suddenly and painfully conscious of the numberless times we use certain muscles, after we have sprained or injured them. Harry's language was not any more objectionable than usual—he simply noticed what he said.

No one need think Mrs. Leonard wanted her children to be affected or unchildlike in their language. She was simply desirous that they should use pure, straightforward English, that any one could comprehend. Nothing

was farther away from her wishes than what English people call priggishness, that is, a conceited and smart way of talking or acting.

It took Harry a long, long time to clear his dialect of that offensive slang. It would show itself just when he least wanted it to appear for many a long year.

There was an extravagant way of talking, which prevailed greatly among the young Leonards, and that troubled their parents about as much as the slang. "It never rained but it poured" there, in a different sense from the one in which the proverb is generally used. This was quite as much a weak point of Alice's as it was of Harry's. She was fully as apt to think things were "perfectly lovely," or "splendid," or "horrid," as he was; and they both had History lessons "a mile long," and were "almost killed," with very small matters; and were "half-starved," or "savagely hungry" nearly every day in the year. Every one of these expressions were literally and entirely untrue, and yet these young people took honest pride in being very

reliable and truthful children. To be sure they never deceived anybody, not even themselves, but I suppose we are responsible for what we say, even if it doesn't do all the harm it might. Mrs. Leonard thought so, and did not fail to remind the children of this fact.

"If there is no other harm in it," she often said, "it comes under the head of 'idle words,' for which, you know, we shall be 'brought into judgment.' But I do not like to have you say what is not strictly true, even when no one thinks you mean what you say; and I don't want my boys and girls to help destroy the force of our dear old mother tongue. It is too noble and beautiful a language to have 'Young America' spoil its adjectives, and take all the strength out of its superlatives.

"You all know the story of the boy who had cried 'wolves' so often when there were none, that at last when they did come, he cried in vain for help. Well, if Harry should call out to me that Will had tumbled down and 'half-killed' himself, and 'it was

really and truly so,' do you suppose my heart would give a great bound, and that I would run to the rescue? No, indeed, I should keep right on with my sewing! I have learned, that when my boys 'break their necks,' and 'cut their fingers off,' I don't need to be in the least alarmed!"

This was about as long a lecture as Mrs. Leonard ever gave, and the children knew it was sound doctrine. Harry and Alice were trying to leave these extravagances out of their speech, but they were so unaccustomed to saying exactly what they meant, that it was about as hard as it was for Harry to purify his speech of slang. They tried to help each other some, and it was very amusing to hear their mutual criticisms and corrections.

"Oh, Harry!" said Alice one day, "the blackest thunder-cloud I ever saw is rolling up from the west."

So Harry looked out and saw an ordinary dark storm-cloud gathering.

"Well," he said, "if that is the *blackest* cloud you ever saw, all I have to say is, you

are the *most unobservingest* girl that ever had clouds roll over her head."

But before an hour had passed by, she had him caught in return. He rose up and tossed his book and pencil down on the table, with, "There, it's getting so dark that I can't study this Algebra another minute. I can't tell one letter from another, no more than if it was midnight."

It was really only the middle of the afternoon, and the storm had darkened the room considerably, but it hadn't much of a resemblance to midnight.

"Now, Master Harry," said Alice, "if you can't tell one letter from another in this light, you are the very most blindest old gentleman I ever saw trying to get along without spectacles!"

Thus they regulated each other with a little wholesome ridicule, and the father and mother helped the reform along. The first step towards learning is, to be aware of one's ignorance, and there is nothing like being conscious of one's faults to insure improvement.

So Alice and Harry were in a very promising way.

But Harry had not been saying "By and by" for a dozen years, without the younger boys catching the same convenient way of getting rid of "toil and trouble." Things had really come to such a pass that the boys were very unreliable. Mrs. Leonard did not ever know certainly that any of her directions would be carried out, unless she personally saw to their fulfillment. It added a hundred fold to her cares and anxieties, and she felt as if Harry was largely responsible for it. No doubt there was a tendency to laziness and dilatoriness in each of the children. I rather think there is in the whole human family; but the example of an older brother is almost irresistible, and, no doubt, developed and cultivated this tendency in Johnny and Will. Yet strange as it may seem, Harry was always very impatient with his own peculiar traits, when they showed themselves in these younger boys. He was very severe in his judgments on their *slackness*, especially if it con-

cerned himself in any way. It seemed as if he felt that he had a sort of monopoly of that quality; it was his own particular prerogative, by virtue of his being the first born, perhaps! He had frequently been reminded by all the family, that this is a democratic country, and there are no laws giving peculiar privileges to oldest sons; not even a monopoly of slowness.

Perhaps it was on the principle, that "it takes a rogue to catch a rogue," that he seemed to be always expecting people were going to dilly-dally instead of promptly executing his requests. If a button was off from his jacket, he usually issued a request to have it sewed on in something like this style. "Here, Alice, won't you get a button, and sew it on here, right straight off, quick, percussion."

Or, if he sent one of his little brothers on an errand, there would always be the injunction, "Now, Johnny, (or Will,) do you get back in just exactly ten minutes (or the shortest possible time, whatever that might be); *scamper* now, that's a good fellow!"

But the speed with which he was waited upon, was a notable instance of the truth of the scriptural saying, "The measure that ye mete out unto others shall be measured to you again;" or of that excellent proverb, that people should "practice what they preach." He never succeeded in getting very prompt service. But if it had only been Harry who felt the reflex influence of his own dilatoriness, it would not rouse our sympathies very much. The sad thing about it was, that the younger boys were forming the same habits, and this evident fact brought trouble enough.

Now that Harry was trying to change his own habits in this regard, he realized that it was very hard to undo the mischief he had done, especially as he was still every day more or less guilty himself. It takes a very thoroughly reformed drunkard to make an acceptable temperance lecturer, and even then, he must always have the sad consciousness that there are many of his old companions, whom, perhaps, he helped to ruin, and whom now he may never help to reform.

Harry tried to be patient with his brothers, but it was hard enough, and sometimes he failed signally, as for instance, when he once sent Will with a very important commission that he did not execute. The history of it was briefly this. The boys and girls of Clear Rapids were a very enterprising set of young Westerners. They were ambitious to be just as nearly like the grown-up young people as possible, and as these had a literary society, of course the younger crowd had one, too. They used to meet fortnightly at each other's houses, and they had badges, and pass-words, and some mysterious letters which formed their name, or rather were the initials of their name. No mortal knew what the name was, except themselves, of course! but the letters were G. T. B. You can guess the name was anything you please. My own surmise is, that they stood for Goodness, Truth and Beauty; but, if you will believe it, some of those older young folks, in Clear Rapids, insisted that they meant "Grand Trundle Bed Society!" How impudent!

Well, they used once in a while to have a "reception," when they entertained their friends with recitations, colloquies, original essays, poems, etc., with a sprinkling of tableaux and charades, etc., to make it lively. They were really very nice and creditable performances, and everybody enjoyed them not a little. Our friends, Harry and Alice, were prominent members of the society. They were rather the "stars" of the organization. There was to be a meeting of the society, for the purpose of arranging the programme of a grand "reception," to come off early in July, soon after the closing of the school for the long vacation; and the time of the meeting was fixed on a certain evening in May. Harry and Alice both fully purposed to be there, but, just at night, Harry was taken suddenly sick; nothing alarming, only a bad sick head-ache, that showed there had been something wrong about his dinner, but he could not go.

"You had better run right along without me," he said to Alice.

"No, indeed," she answered. "It would be

a great idea for me to go off and leave you so sick! I'm going to stay right here, with my bay rum and camphor, and my hot water, and play Florence Nightingale!

"Besides, they can't have a meeting without you, Harry."

"They surely can't have one without you," said Harry, "and let's send Will round to Ned Wilcox's to explain things, and ask them to put it off."

Alice thought it would be a good plan, and went in search of Will. She found him in the midst of a grand game of "I spy," in the back yard, and called to him.

"Come, Will, come here, quickly. Harry wants you to do something for him."

But Will did not know that Harry was sick, so his sympathies were not roused. "It's only some of his laziness," he thought, and he kept right on with his game.

Pretty soon she came out again. "Come, Will," she called; "please come. Harry is sick."

That brought Will, who presently made his

appearance in the parlor, where Harry lay on the sofa. Will was in a most heated and breathless condition; he always played with all his mind and might; and his face and hands, and clothes too, for that matter, were in a truly shocking condition, but he professed his entire willingness to do anything, even to going for the doctor.

"Oh, no! I'm not much sick," said Harry. "I just want you to run around to Ned Wilcox's, and tell him that I'm sick, and so Alice and I can't be at the "G. T. B." meeting to-night, and we wish they would defer it till to-morrow night."

Will was very willing to do the errand, and would have started instantly, but Alice kept him back long enough to give him a good washing and brushing. By that time his enthusiasm was checked a little. He began to think, perhaps, Harry was n't much sick, and was only taking his ease as usual. "He always does like so to have Alice fuss with his hair!" thought the youngster. So when he got out on the street his next thought was

that there was no need of his wasting daylight on the business; he would run round there after dark—they would n't have their meeting till then—and he slipped back to his delightful "I spy."

They had had an early tea, before Alice had called Will, so now there was no occasion for him to come in, and he kept on with his play until it was eight o'clock. Then his mother broke up the game by calling to her own boys that it was bed-time, and the little neighbors had better run home. So Johnny and Will came in, all aglow with heat and fun. Alice came out of the parlor as she heard their merry voices, and asked Will what Ned said about their not coming to the meeting.

"O my grief!" said Will, "if I did n't forget to go! I meant to have gone just as soon as it got dark, and it never got dark at all—the moon shone so!"

Alice was provoked enough, but she only said—"You careless, naughty boy!" and went in to report the case to Harry, who still lay nervous and restless on the sofa.

"The good-for-nothing little scamp!" he cried. "He ought to be whipped"—. Nobody knows what other judgments he might have pronounced if his mother had not come softly, looked at him with uplifted finger, and then shut the door between the rooms.

Alice tried to quiet the storm by assuring him that she presumed there would be no decisions made without consulting them, and that it would not make any difference.

"No," said Harry "it's likely they'll think we're of so much consequence! There'll be Joe Myers and Bell., and John and Tom Sherwood, and ever so many others, will just like to improve a chance to have it all their own way, and there's no telling what they'll do!"

Alas! as it proved ultimately, Harry's predictions were only too true. There were some "cantankerous" spirits even in the "G. T. B." Society! Human nature is human nature in Clear Rapids, and among G. T. B.s! Harry and Alice found, to their dismay, that the meeting was held, and everything was all awry. There had been all sorts of wrong

arrangements made, and the parts assigned to the Leonards were by no means those they would have chosen. To say that "madness ruled the hour," is not any too strong language! There was what the children called "a grand fuss and muss!" The misunderstandings and disagreements and heart-burnings were lamentable. If Harry and Alice had not been very amiable and conciliatory, the G. T. B. Society would have perished from off the earth! As it was, it took Time, the great healer, to make the Society's machinery run smoothly again.





X.

UNCLE HAROLD'S VISIT.

THE Leonards were quite alone in the West, so far as near relatives were concerned. Mr. Leonard's father and mother were still living in the old homestead in New Hampshire, and his brothers and sisters were scattered far and wide, from New England to California, but none of them were in the vicinity of Clear Rapids. Mrs. Leonard's only brother was in the army, and so sometimes stationed at one point, sometimes at another. His home was the fort or the camp, and he knew no other. At rare intervals he availed himself of a leave of absence to visit his only sister, on whom and on whose family

he lavished a wealth of affectionate regard, which was warmly reciprocated. Wifeless and childless himself, he had scarcely any other channel for his domestic feelings than that which he found in the happy home of his sister Margaret; so here they overflowed. He was a thoroughly military man—"a soldier, every inch of him"—upright, honorable, brave, and intensely loyal. Better still, he was a faithful soldier in the army of the Lord—an earnest, warm-hearted Christian, beloved and trusted by those who were under him—he was Colonel Harold Willoughby—and respected and confided in by those who were his superiors in rank.

To the Leonard children he was the hero "without fear and without reproach." His visits were joyfully anticipated and intensely appreciated; and, long after they were over, his sayings and doings were talked over with the warmest enthusiasm.

A family of children growing up in New England, with uncles and aunts and cousins all about them, and, perhaps, a dear old home

where they all gather at Thanksgiving-time to do honor to the never-failing hospitality of dear, silver-haired grandparents, can understand just what a vacancy there had always been in these little people's lives. But many a Western family find themselves equally isolated, and while they miss the pleasant ties of kinship, they learn to be free and social with those who are akin in spirit if not in blood.

So ever and ever so much family love was concentrated upon Uncle Harold; and when, on one Monday morning, in the June of this year we are writing about, Will-o'-the-Wisp came rushing in, all topsy-turvy with excitement over a letter from Uncle Harold, with which his father had just intrusted him, the whole family caught his spirit, and gathered eagerly around the mother to hear the news.

"It's from Uncle Harold to papa," shouted Will; "and papa said run right home to mamma with it, there was such good news in it."

So mamma hastened to read aloud to the



waiting group the welcome tidings that Uncle Harold was planning to come and spend a month with them, and hoped to be able to "report himself at head-quarters" on the next evening. The unlooked-for information was received with tumultuous applause. Harry shook hands with Alice and kissed her rapturously! Rosa jumped right up and down, and clapped her hands. To be sure she had not the slightest recollection of this wonderful uncle, but such little people don't draw very distinct lines between what they remember and what they have heard about.

Will had to turn two or three somersaults before his ideas seemed to find their level, and grave little Johnny sat right down on the floor to take a sense of it.

It was just after the close of the great Rebellion, and if Uncle Harold had been a hero to the children in old, peaceful times, he was twice a hero now, with an empty sleeve pinned across his gallant breast. What decoration of star or ribbon could equal it! They were ready to cry, all of them, after the first out-

burst of joy, to think how it would seem to have him unable to frolic with them just in his old way. Alice's eyes were full of tears as she looked over her mother's shoulder to read "her ownself" the good news, and saw how different the handwriting looked from his old, well-known style. "It takes a good while to learn to write with one's left hand," he wrote, by way of apology. There was a world of pathos in those irregular letters. The influence went with the children all that day and the next, tempering the exuberance of their joy, or rather mellowing and deepening it; but somehow they did not *talk* about it. They were sensitive, delicate children, and felt instinctively that it was too sacred a thing to be talked about. Alice was used to watching her mother's face, and she saw that the tears lay just behind the smiles for those two days; so she said nothing that could bring them to the surface, except just as she was slipping away to bed at night, she whispered, "We will try not to have Uncle Harold miss his arm one bit while he stays with

us." And the mother just kissed her, and said—"My darling!"

Then, at last, the long June day drew to a close. Everything was as fresh and bright and sweet and attractive at the Leonards as expectant love, and good housewifery, and June flowers could make it. And Mrs. Leonard moved about the house, too nervously happy to be still. Alice sat down on the front steps and tried to read, but was glad when the twilight made it impossible—her feelings had made it so sometime before! Mr. Leonard and Harry had gone to the station to meet the coming guest, while Johnny and Will and Rosa were all trying to kill time in various ways. Then the train came, and Alice's watchful eyes soon saw the group coming up the street. Yes, there was three of them, and that straight, tall figure in the middle was unmistakable.

"He has come, mother!" she cried; and then she ran out to the gate and stood for a few moments waiting for them to get a little nearer. A minute afterwards her arms were

around her uncle's neck, and her kisses raining down on his bronzed cheeks.

"Is this my *little* Alice," he said, as he put his one arm around her.

Then there was a lithe little figure came down the steps, and with a smothered sob, and an "O Harold!" took the place from which Alice quickly slipped away.

Then began the delightful visit. What a haven of rest it seemed to the war-worn soldier! And how they all enjoyed entertaining their hero! If a dozen willing hands, always ready to anticipate one's wants, could make one forget the loss of one's right hand, then Alice's promise was more than redeemed.

The children's school was still in session, but they made the utmost of mornings, evenings, Saturdays and Sundays. Mrs. Leonard held the monopoly of the six hours per day, when the children were in school, and improved her privileges to their fullest extent, while Mr. Leonard crowded a great deal of visiting into meal-times. Sundays were precious days to them all. They "took sweet counsel together,

and walked to the house of God in company ; and when they sat out on the piazza, or under the shade of the great oak trees, on Sunday afternoons, Col. Willoughby had an inexhaustible fund of stories of religious life in the army—vivid little pictures of hospital experience, or some of the tragedies of the battle-field. The children were the most deeply interested and sympathetic of listeners. Even Will was a silent and attentive hearer, and little Rose went softly from one to another of the group, generally ending with climbing on to Uncle Harold's knee, and, with her sunny little head on his shoulder, floating off into Sleepy Hollow.

Then, in the twilight, they all gathered round the piano, and sang the sweet songs of Zion.

Col. Willoughby was delighted to renew his acquaintance with his sister's children. He was charmed with Alice, and, in his bright, pleasant namesake, Harry, he was greatly interested. Will, too, claimed to be his namesake—for his name was really Wil-

loughby—and Uncle Harold was, by no means, disposed to dispute his claim; so he promptly appointed him his aid-de-camp, and frequently “detailed” him for special service. “It would be a great pity,” he said, “to let such nimble faculties run to waste!”

“Johnny,” he said, “was such a mathematical little man, he would yet be chief of topographical engineers!” and he talked to him about bridges and fortifications, using building blocks for illustrations, till Johnny really became quite versed in military science.

“I want to press you right into the service,” said Mrs. Leonard to her brother, one day. “The children are so constantly with you, and they are such transparent little people, that I know you have discovered all their weak points, and now you must do all that you can, in the little while you are with us, to help me in their training. I shall be only too glad to have you make any suggestions that may occur to you, and the children will take nothing amiss that comes from Uncle Harold.”

“Your children seem to be very nicely

trained, dear Margaret," he answered. "I may see them with a little glamour over my eyes, but certainly I see very little to criticise."

"Well, I want you to criticise that little," she said, earnestly.

"If you insist upon it, then," he said, "there's my pet, Harry, doesn't quite step to time, but I dare say it's a fault that will mend itself as he grows older."

"No," she said, "it will not mend itself, but I hope that he has set himself seriously about mending it. Do try and use your influence in making him feel this great weakness of his, Harold dear, and I shall be more grateful than you can imagine."

Thus exhorted, Col. Willoughby tried to do what he could, in a very unobtrusive way, to teach our Harry the importance and the beauty of promptness. In the first place, his own example was faultless in this respect. The most scrupulous punctuality always characterized his every-day life. A sort of military accuracy and precision and orderliness was so

habitual with him, that his sister used to say she could set her watch by him at any time; yet it was all "rounded with gracefulness,"—that was part of his Christianity.

The evening of his arrival, he had asked Mrs. Leonard, as he bade her good-night, what time in the morning her "drum, or bugle, or bell, called reveille?" and on being told that the "getting-up bell" was rung at half-past six, and the breakfast bell at seven o'clock, he said, "Ah, then, I shall just have time for my walk—my 'Constitutional,' you know—between the two bells;" and, sure enough, he came running down stairs, just as Johanna rang the first bell; and at precisely seven o'clock, he stood, fresh and smiling, in the breakfast-room, looking, as Alice told him, "brim-full of good-morning!"

The family were all on hand that morning, even Harry, for he had heard his uncle moving around softly in his own room some time before the rising-bell rang, and he could not bear to lose a moment of his precious visit; but, after two or three mornings, Harry re-

lapsed into his old ways, and was often a little late, and the younger boys were, of course, somewhat given to following his example. Their uncle never seemed to notice this, or or any other of the children's ways, that were not quite right. He was so fond of his sister, and so uniformly thoughtful and polite, that he had a way of not seeing anything he was not wanted to see. When Mrs. Leonard's cheeks crimsoned over some wrong doing—over one of Harry's 'by and by's,' for instance—her brother had a way of looking intensely absorbed in a newspaper, or he would grow suddenly very much interested in out-door scenery, but I don't think the harmless little ruse ever really deceived her. So when she begged his assistance about these matters, she did not for a moment doubt that he knew precisely what she wanted. She knew that nothing that concerned her or the children ever passed unnoticed beneath his kind but keen eyes. She did not ask in vain.

Among Col. Willoughby's choice possessions, was a beautiful little bugle, of the most

exquisite workmanship, and the rarest musical tone. He had shown it to the children often, and had entertained them with its wild, sweet music, but had never thought to turn their enjoyment of it to any practical account. Now, however, he thought he would try its virtue in a new line. He told the children one evening, that he was getting tired of such a prosy, unmartial kind of life, and with their mother's permission, was going to try to break up the monotony. (Here he yawned, and looked so bored, that the children all laughed at his funny expression.) He proposed the next morning to begin the day in a slightly military fashion. Instead of having Johanna ring a "getting-up" bell, he would play a reveille on his bugle, and then, precisely two minutes afterward, he would call the roll, and should expect to have each one of his young soldiers put his head out of his bed-room door, and answer to his name. "You see I can't wait for you to dress," he said, "because I must be off on my walk."

The boys were delighted with the plan, of

come, and Johnny and Will talked for a full hour after they went to bed and ought to have gone asleep, about how splendid it would be to sleep out in a tent, and be wakened in the morning in real soldier style.

True to his agreement, at precisely half-past six the next morning, Uncle Harold's bugle "set the wild echoes flying," and at just one hundred and twenty seconds after the music ceased, "Harold Leonard" was called in a cheery voice. It was a pretty severe ordeal for our friend Harry—this jumping right up, without a minute's opportunity to lie and think about it. He was like the greyhound some poet has sung about, who always

"out-run the whole pack in a race,
Yet would rather be hanged than to leave a warm place!"

It was a good deal easier in June than in December, however, and I am happy to say, Harry was equal to the emergency. The name was no sooner called, than out popped his curly head, and his "Ay, ay, sir!" sounded as promptly as the call. Then "John Leonard," and "Willough-

by Leonard," could hardly wait for their turns to come, but broke out in lively chorus, "Here we are!"—and then, what did Alice do, but just show a glimpse of her pretty face, and call out, "Here's the daughter of the Regiment!"

The young Leonards were up for that day.

Nor did the spell fail to work for a single morning during Col. Willoughby's stay. That bugle and Uncle Harold combined, were perfectly irresistible. Towards the latter part of the time, Harry began to experience a positive pleasure in his new virtue. He discovered that he had really never enjoyed his old uneasy morning nap. It was anything but "the sleep of the just." He had never succeeded in silencing his conscience enough to prevent its seriously interfering with his having a good satisfactory snooze. Now, how briskly he came into the breakfast room! With what an air of virtuous assurance he stood ready to exchange morning salutations! And how wonderfully a right start in the morning helps one all day!

To the perfect delight of all, Col. Willoughby found he could give still another month to his sister's family, and it was to be vacation with the younger members of the household, which fact Harry declared "put the tassel on the cap of the climax." But just picture the state of mind these boys were in, when Uncle Harold proposed to take his squad of young soldiers, and literally and truly go into camp for a week, out in the pine woods, fifteen or twenty miles away from Clear Rapids. Speech failed them entirely; they just threw up their hats and gave Uncle Harold three cheers and a tiger!

The week was to be spent in fishing and hunting and having a good time generally, and was to be especially devoted by himself to the "renewal of youth," so Col. Willoughby said, as he laid his plan before Mrs. Leonard, who was a little hard to be won over to this astounding project, but whose consent was freely given in the end, for, incredible as it may appear, Mr. Leonard concluded that his "youth" was in a great deal more dilapi-

dated condition than Col. Willoughby's, and so decided to join the expedition. Mrs. Leonard was overjoyed, to think of her tired-out husband's devoting a whole week to relaxation, and helped the undertaking along with all her varied powers. Alice too, made a desperate effort to be unselfish, and sacrificed her desire to enjoy every moment of her dailing uncle's stay, to the greater desire of having her dear father take this much needed holiday, and to the pleasure of having her brothers have such a "glorious time."

"I'm afraid Will is too young and feather-brained to take on this excursion, Harold," said Mrs. Leonard, as she talked the plan over with her brother, on the evening after it was first suggested.

"Oh, we'll take care of the little fellow, don't fear," said the Colonel; and his father, too, promised to keep special watch over him.

"But, I'm going to be Generalissimo," said Col. Willoughby, "I shall look after my own men. We're going to take you along, John, as a sort of 'bummer.' It is expressly understood

you are to bid 'dull care' good-bye, for the whole week."

"Will, never is '*dull care*,'" said Alice. "One has to be extremely lively to keep up with him."

"A Will-o'-the-Wisp ought to be at home in the woods," suggested Harry.

So Mrs. Leonard laid aside her fears, and it was decided that even Will should go. How his black eyes shone, when he heard the decision, lying in his little bed up stairs in the room right over the parlor, where the conversation took place!

"Johnny," he said, giving his less nervous brother, who was sound asleep, a most disturbing poke, "they're settling it down there all straight."

"Let 'em settle!" said Johnny, who thought in his dreams, that Will was talking about a swarm of bees.





XI.

THE WEEK IN THE WOODS.

WHAT a busy set they were at the Leonards during the three or four days of preparation. And what perfect models of prompt obedience and of cheerful diligence, those boys were. O, if it were always as easy to be good as it is when such brilliant prospects are right before one!

Harry cleaned and polished his gun in the most painstaking manner. He was a good marksman, and loved his gun as if it were a living thing; a feeling that his mother certainly did not share. Guns were her terror and aversion, and she could not see Harry touch one without a shudder, but his father thought

it was safe to trust him with one, so she tried to keep down her fears. Harry rubbed away at his gun as if it were a military review that he was getting ready for, instead of a hunting trip. All his accoutrements were put in perfect order, and his fishing tackle overhauled and made ready. The younger boys too, did a vast amount of preparation. It was quite impossible for Johanna to get around in the wood-house, in the grand entanglement of fish-poles and lines. But the boys were so ready to bring wood and water, and were so amiable and obliging, that she could n't find it in her heart to scold; and she outdid herself in baking and boiling, that the hamper of provisions might be a culinary triumph from top to bottom.

Mrs. Leonard and Alice constituted themselves into a Sanitary Commission, and devised so many comforts and conveniences for the benefit of the excursionists, that Col. Willoughby laughingly declared, they were going to "spoil it all by their mistaken kindness.

"It would be twice as delightful to the boys

if they could 'rough it' on hard tack and salt pork, and coffee without milk!"

"No," said Alice. "We should have you all back on our hands in less than forty-eight hours!"

Col. Willoughby had a little preliminary talk with the boys.

"The first duty of a good soldier is to obey orders," he said, "and promptness is a cardinal virtue in the camp. I shall take my bugle along, and we'll have martial law."

At last they were all ready; a real soldier tent and blankets, tin plates and cups, and a frying pan and kettle. O, it was such fun! And there was a most exciting bustle and stir of course, when the happy morning came. Uncle Harold's bugle was of no account whatever, every boy was up and dressed by daylight, and Will-o'-the-Wisp stationed himself at the gate with a box of fish-worms in one pocket, and his newly-sharpened jack knife in the other, while a box trap with two steel traps packed inside of it, filled his arms. They could hardly get him in to breakfast.

An orderly had to be sent after him with a message from the Colonel.

They were going to the Pine Woods by private conveyance. A big backwoodsman who had been a soldier himself, was engaged to go as driver, and, after depositing them safely, was to take the horses and wagon to a farmer's who lived near the woods, and leave them there for the week, returning himself to the camp to share the week's fun. They were to start early in the morning, so as to reach the woods in good season, and it took all Col. Willoughby's tact and skill and military knowledge to make a prompt thing of it. He had the wagon all packed the night before, and so in the morning there was but little to do, after the early breakfast, but to have the horses put on, say good-bye to the ladies, scramble in and be off. It was a lovely day, and everything went off according to the programme. There may have been a great many happy people the whole world over on that eventful morning, but I think it is very doubtful if there was another such wagon-load of concentrated

jollity as that which rolled out of Clear Rapids with Col. Willoughby's "Detachment of Infantry." Mr. Leonard felt twenty years younger by the time they reached their destination, and Uncle Harold was fully as young as Will! It was such a jolly, jolting ride; it would have shaken the dignity out of anybody!

Then the great pine forest was reached, and the "week in the woods" began. There was a beautiful little lake, like a bit of fallen sky, in the heart of the woods, and by its side the tent was set up and the camp-fire built. The boys hastened here and there, doing precisely as they were told, and brimming over with happy excitement. They had never been among the pines before, and everything was so novel and so charming, from the whisper of the leaves overhead to the elastic carpet of fallen "needles" under foot. Every breath laden with the sweet resinous odor was a fresh delight, and they were discovering new beauties at every turn. Oh, there never, never was anything so "splendid!"—that was the unanimous verdict.

But when the night came on, and they had eaten their first most delicious supper—Uncle Harold could make such capital coffee, and surely bread and butter never tasted that way at home!—they found a world of new pleasure in the evening. The beautiful, dancing lights and shadows, the murmur of the little waves on the sandy shore, the stately majesty of the old pines, and the glorious starry heavens above them—everything was so new and so wonderful! When the boys lay down on their fragrant beds of hemlock boughs, they knew that it had been the very happiest day of their lives, and as they said their evening prayers, somehow it seemed as if God and heaven were nearer there than when they had a roof over their heads.

It would be very easy indeed to write a whole book full of the delightful experiences of that week. The boys each of them talked as much as two or three books full about it when they got home; but I shall not try to tell you only a few things about it. I shall just let each of your vivid imaginations sup-

ply all the deficiencies. Don't you see what an advantage you will gain? You can have Harry shoot a deer, and Will trap a partridge, or a dozen of them for that matter! and Johnny run down a red fox! I'm not at all sure but you will like it better than to have me tell you precisely what did happen. But I can assure you of one thing, they had an overwhelmingly good time! If they should live to be three-score and ten years old, they will never forget it, but, on the contrary, the older they grow the more vivid and beautiful will be the picture in their memories, while the few little "flaws on the diamond" will all fade away. No doubt they will forget that there were any such intruders in their camp as mosquitoes and gnats!

Uncle Harold's hunting days were over, of course, so he kept pretty close to the camp and had his lively, youngest nephew always in sight; yet Will never once felt as if he were watched, so lightly and wisely did this good Uncle hold the reins. Harry and his father enjoyed the gunning part of the excursion,

while Johnny and his uncle set traps and fished. There was a nice boat on the lake which was at their service, and with stout Dick Holden, the hired man, at the oars, they could go fishing to their heart's content. Johnny grew to be an expert; the finny tribes had to suffer; but what incomparable good dinners they made!

The camp never once lost its military character. The bugle was in frequent requisition. Everything moved on like clock-work, and the boys grew wonderfully methodical. They were put through a regular military drill, learned the meaning of military terms, and how to perform all sorts of evolutions. It was the greatest kind of fun. Mr. Leonard found himself laughing and growing fat, according to the time-honored rule.

They used to get so hungry that it was perfectly astonishing what an amount of provisions they would consume, and then they would be so sleepy that they would get to nodding round the evening fire, even when Uncle Harold or Dick Holden were right in

the midst of a grand army story. And how they did sleep! It did not seem any time at all from night till morning. Yet when that exquisite bugle-call came floating into their dreams, it worked like enchantment. Each blanket flew off, and, as Harry declared, "they were often half dressed before they opened their eyes." The lake was a grand place for ablutions, and then Uncle Harold and Dick Holden would have the breakfast smoking. Directly afterwards Col. Willoughby would take out his little war-worn Testament, and the words of Life sounded as sweetly there in the wilderness as they did in the greater privacy, or rather in the narrower bounds of home. Those morning prayers, too, seemed a fitting part of the universal tribute.

The day's plans were laid, and they all gave themselves up to the free woodland life with a zest that showed they were true children of Nature; but the bugle-call was always heeded. Harry's old listless way seemed fairly broken up. He almost forgot how to say "by and by." Only once his uncle heard him promise

little Will to fix his fish line "by and by," and at night inquired of him how he succeeded in doing it. "I have not done it," said Harry.

Col. Willoughby turned an astonished face towards him. "You do not mean that you have broken your promise, my boy, do you?"

"I didn't tell him when I'd do it," said Harry, coloring.

"Is that according to the code of honor?" said his uncle.

Harry made no reply, and there was nothing more said, but he dreamed that night that he was tried at "drum-head court martial," and convicted of falsehood and dishonesty in the "first degree," and sentenced to be shot! He woke up just as he was being led out to execution, and found the great "Rose of Dawn" blossoming in the east; so he sprang up with a thankful heart, and Will's fish line was "fixed" before any one else was stirring in the camp.

There was a story told one evening by the camp fire that made a great impression on the

boys. It was about a young lieutenant in Col. Willoughby's regiment.

"He was a brilliant young fellow," said the Colonel, "dashing and gay and brave, and a great favorite with us all, but he was a little given to thinking that a few minutes' delay about obeying an order couldn't make much difference to any body, or about any thing. One day he was out on a foraging expedition with a dozen men, and having a most exciting time among a flock of turkeys or geese or something of that sort, when I sent an orderly after them, telling them to return to the camp immediately, for I had heard of the sudden appearance of a band of guerillas. But Lieut. Gordon thought he would risk another half hour's sport, and as the result of that little delay, was carried off with all his comrades to spend two years in a Southern prison." Then Col. Willoughby went on to tell them of that horrible two years, and how when the order for an exchange of prisoners at last reached them, eight of the gallant young fellows, so full of life and hope and promise, had gone

beyond the reach of any earthly order, and the dear young lieutenant was among the eight. "Forgive me, boys," he said, as he was dying, "and may God forgive me, but I never can forgive myself, not even in heaven, where I hope to go. I know it was my fault that brought us here!"

The moral of that story was not told, but it was none the less surely recognized.

There was a memorable Sabbath spent in the woods. Dick Holden brought over from the farmer's a New York *Independent* with one of Henry Ward Beecher's sermons in it, and they had what Dick afterward described as "a reg'lar meetin' right thar in the camp, that just beat all the camp meetin's he ever seed," and they had a grand "sing" afterwards, when the boys made the woods ring with

"Oh, we are volunteers in the army of the Lord!"

and ever so many other martial hymns. Uncle Harold told them about Freedmen's meetings, and sang for them some of the wild negro hymns, and at last "the sounding aisles of the

green woods rang" with the "Battle Hymn of the Republic."

As Harry lay looking up at the stars that night, he thought of Jacob at Bethel, and felt as if it were the most natural thing in the world to dream of a "ladder set upon the earth, and the top of it reaching to heaven; and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it."

But the week of camp life came to an end, and they struck their tents and went back to civilized life a little reluctantly. A rainy day, however, made it easier, and they arrived at home somewhat moist, but with undampened ardor. They were laden with trophies—cones and lichens, and last, but not least, a box of freshly caught fish.

"We've caught everything we really expected to, mother," shouted Johnny, as they drove up, "except those dreadful colds you prophesied."

Col. Willoughby felt as if he had "taken a dip in the fountain of youth," and Mr. Leonard 'was good for another pull of twenty years!'



XII.

UNCLE HAROLD'S LEAVE-TAKING.

THE few remaining days of Col. Willoughby's visit ran all too rapidly away. They were crowded full of "the dear delights of home." The children followed him about and hung upon his words. They were not only hands but feet for him to such an extent that he declared he should soon be good for nothing under such treatment.

"I shall grow so fat and lazy that I shall look more like an alderman than a soldier," he said; but it did not look very probable.

They never had so much fun in all their lives, they said; neither did they ever learn in

so short a time so many useful things or get so many hints for improvement.

Mrs. Leonard was more grateful to him than even her loving eyes expressed, and dreaded the day of his going away. They all united in trying to make a civilian of him, now that "this cruel war was over," but he had only one answer to all their kind persuasions.

"I've followed the drum too long to try any new kind of life ; besides," he often added, playfully, "I might not wear so well as you think. I don't stay with you long enough for the gloss to get worn off!" Whereupon, of course, the "blue-eyed banditti" would make a rush at him, and, as they said, "silence his batteries."

When at last the parting came, it was very serious business. The older people kept up a show of cheerfulness pretty successfully, but the children quite broke down. Their uncle tried to comfort them with talk of future visits, and of frequent letters, but the best they could do was to smile through their tears. So there was nothing to be done but to kiss them all again, and shorten the scene. With an earn-

est "Good-bye again, and God bless you all!" he was gone.

The children went mournfully about the house for a little while, and tried in a kind of listless way to occupy themselves, but in a few moments Harry went up to his own room and Alice to hers. It was but a very little while, however, before they were both back again, in a great state of excitement. They had each discovered a note on their tables, and on Harry's was also a case containing a beautiful gold watch! A watch! It was the very thing of all others that he had longed for, from the time when he used to sit on his father's knee and listen to the marvelous ticking, up to the present hour! How had Uncle Harold divined his secret wishes?—for, of course, he was the donor.

"It is just like him," cried Harry, as he showed his treasure to one and another of the family who had gathered round him;" it is just like him to find out precisely what a fellow wants most, and then surprise him with it, and run off before one can say thank you!"

The watch was indeed a beautiful and valuable gift. A plain but heavy hunting-cased watch, of American manufacture, of medium size, and evidently the best of its kind—what Uncle Harold bought always was. On the inside of the case was Harry's name engraved in delicate German text, and the date of the gift. Oh, it was such a precious and deeply appreciated present! Harry could hardly bear to let it go out of his hands long enough to let the rest of the family look at it. Will couldn't be trusted with it any way! He had to submit to the disgrace of having it held while he gazed at it in mute admiration. But this ignominious treatment called out the slightly envious speech—

“Now I suppose Master Harry'll feel cranker than ever!”

They all laughed, but Alice said, “Wait, Will; don't get excited; your turn is coming,” and she held aloft her note, to which she had only been waiting for a moment's opportunity to call their attention.

“Now listen to me,” she went on, “if you

want to be made to open your eyes, every one of you," and she read :

"MY DEAR ALICE,—Fearing that you are going to feel quite too badly over your old uncle's leave-taking, I have devised a little plan to enliven your spirits. Some time to-day there will arrive on your premises a pony, which I beg you will accept as a little token of my great love for you. You will find it a gentle and well-broken animal, perfectly safe for even Will to manage, and I hope both of my dear little nephews will take as much pleasure as yourself in riding the pretty creature." (At this point Will interrupted the reading with what may be mildly termed a war-whoop!) "I do not think, my dear," the note went on, "there are quite as many roses on your cheeks as there ought to be. I am a little afraid you are too much given to poetical flowers," (Here Alice blushed till her cheeks looked more like peonies than roses,) "and I trust that your pony will tempt you into a more out-door way of living. As you go can-

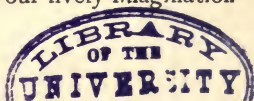
tering over the prairies, or through the woodland, I hope you will catch great draughts of inspiration, more needful to you at present than the 'divine afflatus' I presume you have read about!

"Always most affectionately, your

UNCLE HAROLD."

There was a sort of domestic whirlwind as Alice closed the reading of her note. They all clapped their hands, and ran around, and talked in such lively chorus, that Mrs. Leonard was glad to sit down and put her hands over her ears. When the tempest had subsided a little, Alice begged Harry to read his note. It read as follows:

"MY DEAR HARRY,—Will you accept this little present from me, and keep it always for my sake? I hope it will not only please you very much, but be a source of real profit to you. I think you will find it a very accurate little time-keeper, and I hope it will inspire you with a similar power. When you hear its busy, little tick, let your lively imagination



invest it with a voice proclaiming constantly the value of seconds; and let it remind you, too, sometimes, of Your loving uncle,

“HAROLD.”

“Now, that’s what I call a good way to preach,” said Harry.

“Uncle Harold certainly knows how to get his auditors into the right frame of mind to listen to his preaching!” said Mrs. Leonard, laughing. “But now Johnny and Will, come here,” she added, “and see what this ever-thoughtful uncle has left for you;” and she showed them a row of juvenile books, into which Johnny plunged headlong, and was entirely lost to all other externals for the next three hours!

“This is your property, Will-o’-the-Wisp,” she said, suddenly uncovering and revealing a velocipede. “I guess Uncle Harold thought you were not swift-footed enough!”

But Will hardly waited to hear the remark, he was up and off on his new steed

“Now, come to me, my darling Rosa,” said

the mother, to the little pet of the household speaking in that tone which one's voice almost unconsciously assumes when we talk to such little birdlings—"Come right here and 'open your mouth and shut your eyes.' Uncle Harold told me to be sure and drop some comfort, in the shape of bon bons, into your precious little mouth, just as soon as you found out that he was gone!" And she gave Rosa, whose lip had been down for some minutes, a very sweet bit of consolation.

Johanna found that she, too, had been most generously remembered by Col. Willoughby in various ways, and made some very fervent ejaculations to the saints in his behalf.

Harry put his new watch in his pocket, and arranged the chain very jauntily; but, upon being told by his father of the boy who said it was "nine o'clock by his new watch and chain," he made a little less showy disposition of the chain. He could hardly resist the temptation for some time to regulate the sun by that wonderful new chronometer of his!

Before the afternoon of Col. Willoughby's

departure was half over, a man brought into the yard the eagerly-looked-for pony. Harry declared Alice had been watching the sky, as if she expected it was going to be "launched earthward from the moon!" But, however that may be, there did not seem to be anything supernatural about the beautiful little creature, or its mode of coming. It was of dark-chestnut color, with flowing mane and tail, and gentle-eyed as a gazelle. There was a nice lady's-saddle on the pony, and the bridle lay temptingly over her neck—there was nothing to do but to take possession; but Alice was too much overpowered with emotion to do anything except to walk around the pretty, graceful animal and caress her. Alice laughed and cried, "just like a girl," Harry said, which does n't strike me as anything remarkable! She went into raptures, of course, and exhausted her whole stock of superlative epithets, and then discovered that she had done just what her mother had told her, "taken the strength all out of her superlatives," by too frequent use on unimportant occasions, so

that now she was utterly at a loss for any terms sufficiently strong for her needs. The boys, too, were in a tremendous state of excitement, and brought the whole neighborhood to their windows to see "what under the sun ailed the Leonard boys." They danced and they sang—they shouted and they whistled! Will said it was just like "the fourth of July, only without the fire-crackers;" but Johnny thought it was a great deal more "like Christmas!" They mounted the pony and rode her round the yard, and broke out into new raptures over her gait and docility. Then Alice dashed into the house and in five minutes reappeared in a riding-habit, improvised out of a long, black alpaca dress-skirt of her mother's, a little black cloth jacket of her own, worn over a white under-waist; a jaunty little black hat of Harry's, with a long black feather from her mother's winter bonnet laid over it in the most approved style! To be sure, it was one of mother's very best dresses, but Alice turned her glowing, spirited face toward her mother with such an

appealing, deprecating look, that it was impossible to say a word even of expostulation.

“ ‘ Now, small boys, get out of the way ! ’ ” she quoted gaily, and, with Harry's gallant assistance, she sprang lightly on to the saddle. I can assure you there went a thrill through her veins she had never felt before, for it was the first time she ever was on horseback ; and I know that it was the unanimous verdict of that whole impartial circle of onlookers, that she had never looked half so pretty before !

Now, no doubt, there might be another book written about that chestnut pony, and the pleasure it brought to the young Leonards, but I will only tell you that it fully equalled their expectations, and did for Alice all that her kind uncle hoped it would. She grew rosy and bright-eyed and firm-muscled that summer, as he could desire.

I wish I could tell you that they never quarrelled over it, or were unhappy about the way in which their turns to ride her came ; but I can, at least, say this, that they did not have any more such troubles than most young

people have, and, on the whole, they got a vast amount of enjoyment out of their pony, and considered themselves the most fortunate of children.

The pony, too, although it led a very stirring life for a while, certainly must have felt, "in her placid and dumb meditations and confusions," that, what with petting and rubbing and feeding with dainties, she too, was extremely lucky.

It was decided, after much consultation, that the pony's name should be "Julie," in perpetual remembrance of that happy month of July when Uncle Harold had stayed with them.

To go back to the afternoon of the pony's arrival. Underneath all the wild overflow of delight with their new treasures, the children were dimly conscious of an under-current of sadness about their dear uncle's absence. It would have been so nice to have been able to thank him right there on the spot, and in his own proper person! Harry and Alice were more aware of this under-current than the

others, of course, and they really felt self-condemned to think they could be happy at all! It was something of a puzzle, however to decide just how they ought to feel, and so they wisely refrained from much self-examination!

One thing they all decided, however, that it was just like Uncle Harold to try to lighten the sorrow of those he loved, even when the grief was on account of his own absence. He was too unselfish to want to be missed any more than could be helped.

As tea-time drew near, Johanna was observed to call Alice into the kitchen with an air of great secrecy; and then Alice came in, looking ever so innocent, and wanted mother to promise to stay in the parlor, and let her and Johanna take the sole charge of the preparations for tea, which Mrs. Leonard thought rather a singular request, as she was quite in the habit of doing so. But she promised, and in process of time the tea-bell rang. Not with its accustomed ting-a-ling-a-ling, however, but with a sharp, decisive little stroke, that seemed

like a small, peremptory voice ; and it called the whole family together without delay, for they all happened to be within hearing. The pony had been taken to the barn, formally introduced to old Prince, who accorded to her a gracious welcome in the shape of a whinny, and supplied with the best supper the barn afforded ; so the boys were all close at hand, and responded to the new summons. They went into the dining-room and to their usual places at the table—then the mystery was solved. There, in glittering array, stood a new silver tea-set ! Mr. and Mrs. Leonard gazed at the silver and at each other in mute surprise—the boys set up a great hue and cry of exclamations and questions. Alice looked as if she had had a previous illumination on the subject, but made a great effort to “keep dark” now ! So Mrs. Leonard began to look around for some other source of information. The tea-pot was full of smoking tea ; the creamer was brimming with its delicious contents ; the sugar-bowl looked equally innocent of any hidden communications ; but when its

cover was raised—Ah ! there lay a tell-tale, in the shape of a dainty little note. Mrs. Leonard read it in silence, with brimming eyes—then aloud to the family. This was what it said :

“ MY DARLING SISTER,—Will you give this tea-service a place at your table? The cheerful, hospitable board I so sorrowfully leave ! Let it daily remind you of me—not sadly of my absence, but of how gladly I would be with you.

“ The little spring-bell, I hope, will prove a real help to you in your faithful efforts to call your busy brood together.

“Always your loving HAROLD.”

They might have grown rather sad again after the reading of the note—the beautiful service so poorly filled the vacant place ; but Johanna, who was waiting, could remain silent no longer, and broke into an excited torrent of explanation—

“ Sure an’i t’s meself that’s had to go creep-

in' round like a thafe, shovin' the big box that held the things into any hidin' place I could find ; for sez Colonel Willoughby, sez he to me, ' Can you keep a secret ? ' An' sez I, ' Trust me for that ! ' And sez he, ' If a box should come slyly into the kitchen this evenin', could you stow it away somewhere, and open it when nobody is round, and put the things on the table to-morrow night for tea ? ' ' Faith an' I can' sez I ; an' thin' sez he, ' It's silver, an' you will be careful about it, will you ? ' ' Be sure I will,' sez I. An' in the evenin', sure enough the door opened softly, whin I was sittin' all alone, an' in come the box, an' I was all of a trimble ; but I slid the box under the table, an' not a bit o' comfort has I had since—slidin' it here, and slidin' it there—thryin' to be sly-like, an' me so honest ! Niver a wink did I slape last night, for fear o' the burglars, an' dramin' o' robbers ivery time I dropped into a doze ! It's the verra last secret I hope I'll have the kapin' of, if there's silver in it ! "

So, of course, instead of crying, they all fell

to laughing and condoling with Johanna; and thus ended Uncle Harold's leave-taking.

But the good influences of his visit, and all other good influences, did not end, but went on, a great power for the advancement of everything that was pure and lovely in the lives of the young Leonards. Their mother thought over carefully the last clause of her brother's note to herself, and devised various ways of making that little spring-bell useful. She came out, as the railroad people do, with a new time-table, and a new code of regulations. One of them was, that within five minutes after the ringing of the large bell for meals, she should be in her place and strike that little bell, and any one of her young people who, through dilatoriness, failed to be present at that time, should take bread and water for his or her repast. It proved a most excellent arrangement. Each one of them made a few meals on that frugal fare—but only a few. Children do have such good appetites!

And now that our young friends are in so good a way, with a bright sky arching over

them, and so fair a future stretching out before them, perhaps we shall find no better place to bid them, at least, a temporary good-bye.



